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ABSTRACT

The following 12 papers, on a variety of topics, were given at the 1990 meeting of the American Journalism Historians' Association: (1) "'Let Jim Handle It': President Dwight D. Eisenhower's First Heart Attack and Jim Hagerty's Handling of the Media" (Joseph V. Trahan, III); (2) "Eisenhower's Pyrrhic Victory in 1956: Mixed Lessons from the First National TV Campaign" (Craig Allen); (3) "The Black Press and the Campaign for a Federal Antilynching Law, 1933-34" (Leonard Ray Teel); (4) "Persuasive Argumentation Styles in Selected 1931-33 'Negro World' Editorials by Marcus Garvey" (Svetlana Lucas); (5) "'The Tennessee Western Monitor and Religious Journal' in the Anti-Slavery Movement" (Keith E. Terry); (6) "Alice Allison Dunnigan and the Hastening of the Modern Civil Rights Movement" (Rodger Streitmatter); (7) "A 'Hitler Myth?': American Popular Periodicals and Adolf Hitler 1933-38" (Anthonette L. McDaniel); (8) "Wallace H. White, Jr.: Radio's Quiet Back Stage Negotiator" (Donald G. Godfrey); (9) "The Journalist as Iconoclast: H. L. Mencken and the Free Lance" (Wallace B. Eberhard and Gary D. Evans); (10) "F. G. Bonfils, Teapot Dome and the Founding of the American Society of Newspaper Editors: A Struggle over Professionalism during America's Jazz Age" (Bruce J. Evensen); (11) "Chronicle of a Failed Coup: W. Eugene Smith versus Time-Life Incorporated" (Anna Banks); and (12) "The Journalist as Modern Sage: James Agee and the Prophetic Voice" (Paul Ashdown). (SR)

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Part 1

Meeting held at Coeur d'Alene, ID, October 2-7, 1990

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"Let Jim Handle It": President Dwight D. Eisenhower's First Heart Attack
And Jim Hagerty's Handling of the Media

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"Let Jim Handle It": President Dwight D. Eisenhower's First Heart Attack
and Jim Hagerty's Handling of the Media

President Dwight D. Eisenhower's heart attack on September 24, 1955 in Denver, Colorado ignited the debate of who was in charge of the government during a presidential disability and how much information should be communicated to the American people during this crisis. President Eisenhower decided on both of these important issues, as the Fitzsimons Army Hospital medical staff placed him under an oxygen tent and began treating him for his heart attack. He instructed his presidential press secretary of three years, James C. Hagerty, to "tell the truth, the whole truth; don't try to conceal anything."¹ Eisenhower remembered how misled and deceived he had felt during President Woodrow Wilson's 1919 illness and he did not want a repeat of this episode. Therefore, Hagerty, after consulting with President Eisenhower, decided to execute a complete open and honest media policy in communicating President Eisenhower's illness to all publics.² Noel Clark, of The London Daily Mail, wrote, "Hagerty's performance during those turbulent days and nights is now a legend among reporters. It was his greatest if saddest triumph."³

Concerning the next important decision of who takes command when the president is disabled, President Eisenhower instructed Hagerty to inform his administration and the media that Vice-President Richard Nixon would preside over all cabinet and national security meetings in the president's absence.⁴ Hagerty had already informed Nixon by phone, prior to flying to Denver. His reply according to Hagerty, was "My God! That's awful. Is there anything I can do?"⁵ Hagerty replied that he would keep him updated on the president's condition. Eisenhower was forcing the issue on presidential power succession during a disability twelve years prior to the passage of the twenty fifth amendment

which was enacted in 1967.⁶ However, according to George Reedy, author of Twilight of the Presidency, "No one but his doctors will ever be certain of the extent of the disability suffered by the president. It is unlikely that it was very great, as he was obviously a coherent, thinking man throughout the period."⁷

Before delving any further, it is important to introduce both President Eisenhower and his press secretary, James Hagerty. President Eisenhower, the thirty-fourth president of the United States was born on October 14, 1890 in Denison, Texas. He grew up in America's heartland, Abilene, Kansas. Upon graduating from the United States Military Academy (West Point) in 1915, he embarked on a long, highly decorated and distinguished Army officer military career. During his thirty-three year career he rose in rank from a butter bar 2nd Lieutenant to the five star rank of General of the United States Army. He was elected President of the United States in 1952 by a convincing margin of fifty-five percent of the popular vote and served for two full terms from 1953 to 1961. Dr. Stephen Ambrose in the second volume of his biography, Eisenhower describes his presidency in this manner,

Dwight Eisenhower is one of only two Republicans (the other was Grant) to serve two full terms as President. Along with the two Roosevelts, he is the only twentieth century President who, when he left office, still enjoyed wide and deep popularity. And he is the only President in this century who managed to preside over eight years of peace and prosperity.⁸

Dr. Ambrose's description of President Eisenhower the man is very revealing and positive. He explained, during an interview with the author, that "Ike was Ike! Firm, fair, dignified, positive, good looking, great personality and a natural born public relations man."⁹ However, Eisenhower like all mortal beings, had his faults; One of them being his violent temper. Theodore White, the historian and author of In Search of History: A Personal Adventure, described Eisenhower in this manner,

Yet Ike's mind was not flaccid; and gradually, reporting him as he performed, I found his mind was tough, his manner deceptive; that the rosy private smile could give way, in private, to furious outbursts of temper; that the tangled rambling rhetoric of his off-the-record remarks could, when he wished, be disciplined by his own pencil into clean hard prose. ¹⁰

President Eisenhower died March 29, 1969 and is buried in the Eisenhower Center Chapel in Abilene, Kansas.

The man Eisenhower selected to become his press secretary was James Hagerty. He was born May 9, 1909 in Plattsburg, New York and grew up in New York City attending Bronx Grade School, Evander Childs High School and Blair Academy in Blairstown, New Jersey. In 1934 he graduated from Columbia University with a B.A. degree. From 1934 to 1943 Hagerty wrote for The New York Times as a city staff member, legislative correspondent and deputy Albany Bureau Chief. New York Governor Thomas Dewey appointed Hagerty as his executive assistant and press secretary in 1943. He handled Dewey's press relations from 1943 to 1952. During this period, Hagerty assisted Dewey in his two unsuccessful presidential campaigns in 1944 and 1948. In 1952, Dewey recommended that Eisenhower hire Hagerty as his press secretary. Eisenhower agreed and Hagerty served him in that capacity from 1952 to 1961. Hagerty became the American Broadcasting Company's (ABC) Vice-President for News, special events, public affairs and corporate relations in 1961. He retired from ABC in 1975 and died from heart failure on April 11, 1981. ¹¹

A myriad of fellow Eisenhower White House staffers, reporters and critics have described Hagerty's presidential press secretary tenure and personality but none portrayed him more accurately than Patrick Anderson in his book, The President's Men. He writes,

He was the first presidential press secretary to be, both by instinct and experience, more of a professional public relations man than newspaperman. The homely, stocky, chain smoking, hard drinking Hagerty looked and talked

like a character out of the front page but his instincts toward news manipulation and techniques of mass psychology were as smooth and sophisticated as any Madison Avenue executive. ¹²

Charles Roberts, however, a former White House Newsweek correspondent, offers yet another viewpoint on Hagerty's personality, physical characteristics and press secretary tenure. During a March 15, 1990 interview with Roberts, Hagerty was described to the author as "Bull-headed, stubborn, thin-skinned, possessing no sense of humor and very hot tempered! However, he had total access to Ike and was a great technician who was extremely knowledgeable in politics, domestic issues and of course public relations. Ike totally depended on Hagerty." ¹³

The presidential press secretary's role and influence in every presidential administration from George Washington to Dwight Eisenhower has been a very complicated, awkward and at times thankless one. But it was Hagerty who "is generally considered to be something of a genius at media relations..." ¹⁴ A press secretary answers to three very demanding taskmasters; the president who expects him to jump on command and give him total undisputed loyalty; the White House staff who have their own media agenda and are trying to capture the president's positive favor; and finally the news media representatives who have only one mission to get all the information they can quickly and without competition. ¹⁵ Larry Speakes, President Ronald Reagan's former deputy press secretary, commented "The press secretary acts as a communication bridge between the president and the American people through the flow of news to the news media. One of his most important duties is to make sure that the president's policies and views are accurately reported in a timely fashion to the public." ¹⁶ Hagerty believed that his main job was loyally working for his one boss, President Eisenhower. "You were always in a squeeze," Hagerty said, "every

day but not on loyalty. My loyalty was clearly to the President." ¹⁷

Therefore, a presidential press secretary's very survival on a daily basis is very stressful and precarious at best. Hagerty, even with all the advanced communication technology believed that at all times he had to remain flexible. He responded in a letter, "Playing it by ear -- in other words each day is different and you just have to make the decisions as they come up. That is the part which makes it so interesting of course." ¹⁸ Hagerty had other qualities that made him a successful press secretary for eight years.

An understanding of at least seven important qualities of a successful press secretary is crucial in the author's analysis of James Hagerty's handling of the media during Eisenhower's heart attack. Access is the first and most significant one. Without total presidential access the press secretary cannot effectively serve his boss and the media. "A press secretary is going to be a reflection of the president," says George Reedy, President Lyndon Johnson's press secretary. "If he isn't the president will get rid of him." ¹⁹ If the media believes that the press secretary has access to the president's inner sanctum then he is a credible information source. According to Robert Pierpoint, former CBS-TV White House correspondent, "Hagerty's greatest quality was his total access to Ike. He was the first modern press secretary and along with Jody Powell one of the two best because of their total access and ability to speak for the president always." Pierpoint continued, "and at times Hagerty made policy on his feet." ²⁰

The press secretary must have the president's full trust and confidence in his ability as well as complete loyalty to the boss. Bill Moyers, one of President Johnson's press secretaries said, "The president told me when he asked me to take this job, your first loyalty is to the country, your second

loyalty is to me, your third loyalty is to the press. I don't anticipate that there will ever be serious contradictions between those three loyalties. He was right." ²¹ Hagerty, according to Robert Donovan former New York Herald Tribune and Los Angeles Times White House correspondent possessed these important qualities. "Ike likes to have Jim Hagerty around, he had a lot of confidence in his public relations and political savvy. He totally trusted him." ²² The press secretary is not elected to his position he is appointed by one person - the president. Therefore, he is his personal media representative and cannot accomplish anything without his full trust and confidence.

A thick skin is a quality that allows the president's press secretary to deflect the media's barbs and act as a presidential buffer during both of his daily media briefings. Sometimes sarcasm, ridicule and a sense of humor are a press secretary's only weapons under the glaring lights, flashing cameras and sharp probing media tongues. Hagerty was an excellent buffer for President Eisenhower during his eight year term. Hagerty recalled, "President Eisenhower would say, 'Do it this way' I would say, 'If I go to that press conference and say what you want me to say, I would get hell! With that he would smile, get up and walk around the desk, pat me on the back and say, 'My boy, better you than me.'" ²³ However, Hagerty apparently did not possess a thick skin and had little or no sense of humor according to a number of former White House reporters and staffers. Charles Roberts was extremely critical of Hagerty's "lack of a sense of humor, defensiveness and thin skin." ²⁴ Robert Donovan agreed with Charles Roberts that "Hagerty was thin skinned as well as at times tough to deal with, belligerent and cocky." ²⁵ Cabell Phillips, a New York Times White House correspondent disagreed with Roberts and Donovan on Hagerty's sense of humor. Phillips writes, "His humor is quiet, obvious and infectious." ²⁶

Stephen Hess agreed with Roberts and Donovan that "Hagerty did not have much of a sense of humor. In order for a person to be an effective press secretary they must have one." ²⁷ One thing is clear, he was a quick thinker during his many meetings with the media and responded with candor, accuracy and toughness even if he did not have much of a sense of humor.

Credibility and quick thinking ability are imperative for a press secretary's very survival. If he cannot accurately portray the president's messages, policies, thoughts and moods then both the White House and his credibility are in jeopardy. Hagerty was a master at reflecting President Eisenhower's inner thoughts and decisions. The correspondents thought that Hagerty was acting on his own because they had such limited access to the president. Hagerty said they were dead wrong. - "Many of the times the notes or the sentences were written in the personal handwriting of the president, and he said, 'say this.' And I'd get up and say that. There wasn't any answer that I made when I thought I was not reflecting the president's viewpoint. The only answers I made were when I knew I was reflecting the president's viewpoint." ²⁸ Bryson Rash, former NBC-TV White House correspondent said, "Hagerty made lots of decisions on his feet which were right and quick." ²⁹ The press secretary lives and dies with his and the White House's credibility.

A sense of proper timing is a characteristic of a triumphant press secretary. He must be willing, able and have the opportunity to inform his boss, the president, when he should release information and the public relations implications of all policy decisions. Stephen Hess said, "Hagerty always added the public relations aspects of every Eisenhower policy decision." ³⁰ Hagerty's power and influence in the Eisenhower administration is clearly evident in the following quote,

James C. Hagerty today is the most powerful press agent in history. As President Eisenhower's press secretary Jim has amassed unique authority and influence. He advises on top White House policy decisions which affect the whole world. He gives orders to members of the Cabinet on administration announcements and the members consult him on top level public relations matters.³¹

Outstanding communication skills and a knowledge of all governmental issues and policies are two final but necessary qualities for succeeding in this stressful profession. The president's spokesperson must be able to effectively write and speak on a wide array of topics with knowledge and authority. If he cannot accomplish these tasks in a credible, effective manner he is totally useless to his boss. Hagerty was a superb articulator of Eisenhower's policies because "Ike gave him leeway, time, information and power."³² Robert Pierpoint said, "Talking to Hagerty was almost like talking to the president."³³ Hagerty confirmed the necessity for these qualities in an April 17, 1958 speech he gave to the Women's National Press Club. He said "The next press secretary, be it a man or woman, must be a capable, articulate spokesperson who has a better working knowledge about a wide variety of topics ranging from government, politics, the media, science, economics to zoology."³⁴ These are just a few of the most important successful press secretary qualities as well as a discussion of Hagerty's possession of a certain number of these that he revealed during what he referred to as his "toughest spell as White House press secretary when his chief lay sick, immobilized on a hospital bed."³⁵

Tragedy struck the American presidency like a Kansas lightning bolt during a whirling tornado on September 24, 1955. President Eisenhower's first attack was not only a personal crisis for him but a national one as well. While he was receiving treatment from his personal physician, Dr. Howard Snyder and the Fitzsimons Army Hospital medical staff in Denver, Colorado, Hagerty was enroute on an Air Force Constellation plane to handle the heart attack crisis.

His information was a bit sketchy since he knew that according to his assistant press secretary Murray Snyder, "Dr. Howard Snyder has just called me and told me that the President has suffered a heart attack and that they are taking him to Fitzsimons Army Hospital. I am going to tell the press that the President has had a mild coronary thrombosis and, of course, I wanted to let you know first." ³⁶

Hagerty's plane touched down at 11:46 P.M. in Denver and he immediately rushed to Fitzsimons Army Hospital where he was briefed by Dr. Snyder on the president's condition. He was also told that Eisenhower was elated that Hagerty had come back to Denver to assist his boss in this crisis. Additionally, Dr. Snyder quoted Eisenhower as having told him, "Tell Jim to take over and make the decisions - and handle the story." ³⁷ What exactly did that statement mean to Hagerty and Eisenhower's staff? Did it mean that he was in charge of the American government and should make all policy decisions until the president recovered? Or did it just mean that Hagerty would make all public relations decisions on what to release or not release on Eisenhower's condition?

Hagerty had always rejected the belief that he in fact, ran the presidency from Denver while his boss was being treated for his first heart attack. He believed that Eisenhower was just referring to his continuing press secretary role not one of making presidential policies.

Nor did I think I was running the government during the heart attack! When the president said 'Take over, Jim,' we knew exactly what was meant by that. We had often talked of the gap in the Constitution - the inability of the president, not the disability. President Eisenhower said the health of the president was an important property of the people of the United States. This came right from him. The press misinterpreted his remark- not only for the people of the United States. It was read in the Kremlin as closely as in this country. ³⁸

President Eisenhower in his book, Mandate For Change, does not comment specifically on Hagerty's alleged policy making powers during his heart attack.

His only remembrances on this subject are that Hagerty carried out his total truth and candor campaign to perfection.

A number of sources reveal, however, that Hagerty was the senior and most powerful Eisenhower administration official in Denver until Sherman Adams, Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, arrived in late September to take charge. "Indeed it is difficult to think of anyone's authority in those first couple of days exceeding that of Hagerty, a very sure-footed official with a large capacity and a readiness to make decisions. After all, Hagerty was a formidable member of the Eisenhower administration."³⁹ Additionally, Hagerty's official sole position of the only authorized Eisenhower administration spokesperson placed him in a very powerful role which far exceeded his press secretary duties. "It was more Jim's decision than anybody else to tell the truth during Ike's heart attack."⁴⁰ Even though Hagerty was by no means "acting president,"⁴¹ his authority in Denver was unchallenged by any of the senior White House staff and he utilized it. After all, Eisenhower during his first post heart attack press conference on January 8, 1956, responded to a question that, "James C. Hagerty was one of his trusted advisers."⁴² By late 1955, Hagerty had become one of the three most influential members of Eisenhower's administration. "In the hierarchy of power in that administration, Hagerty ranks just behind Sherman Adams and George Humphrey."⁴³

Upon being briefed by Dr. Snyder, the five feet, nine inch tall, forty-seven year old, tough talking Hagerty immediately took charge of the chaotic situation in Fitzsimons Army Hospital. The White House press corps, which would increase to one hundred fifty correspondents by midweek⁴⁴ were roaming the hospital corridors desperately trying to get the truth on the president's condition. Hagerty had hundreds of media questions and

unconfirmed rumors shouted at him as they encircled him. He told them that a media conference would be conducted as soon as he could gather all the facts.⁴⁵ After his quick meeting with the correspondents, Hagerty conferred with Eisenhower on their communication strategy for this crisis. They agreed together on a policy of full candid disclosure of President Eisenhower's medical condition.⁴⁶ With this understanding, Hagerty had the guidance and support he so badly needed to follow Ivy Lee's, co-founder of the public relations profession, philosophy. Lee's three professional cornerstones of candor, full disclosure and convincing management that their best interests will be served by always telling the truth, provided Hagerty with his guiding light during his traumatic experience. Hagerty became President Eisenhower's main image gatekeeper during his first personal crisis. He was guided by the thought that truth was always the best policy in any situation.

From September through December 1955, in Denver, Gettysburg and Washington, D.C., while President Eisenhower recovered from his heart attack, "James C. Hagerty controlled administration news"⁴⁷ with a tight but candid and honest manner. The media was extremely interested in every detail of Eisenhower's medical condition and Hagerty fulfilled their needs splendidly. With the assistance of both Dr. Paul Dudley White, a noted Boston heart specialist, and Dr. Snyder, Hagerty who had digested portions of Dr. White's authoritative heart disease text, issued four daily medical bulletins and provided all media present an opportunity to extensively question both doctors on the president's condition. His actions won critical acclaim from the media and his critics alike who noted "The fullest, frankest information ever given the United States about the physical condition of an ailing president."⁴⁸

Hagerty, existing on only three to four hours of sleep a night, even

gave out a report on presidential bowel movements since Dr. White pointed out how essential this bodily function was to a recovering heart attack patient. However, a number of Eisenhower administration officials objected to these personal references but their sharp criticism did not even phase Hagerty's actions. He flooded the nation with news of the illness and probably helped avert a great deal of hysteria.⁴⁹ Not only did Hagerty's medical press conference briefings cover the president's bowel movements but the trio of Hagerty, White and Snyder clearly, honestly and patiently told the media what Eisenhower ate, read, listened to, his temperature, heart rate, how much oxygen he consumed daily, as well as how much sleep the president got nightly. In short, everything humanly possible on Dwight D. Eisenhower's changing medical condition was revealed with crystal clear clarity by Hagerty, White and Snyder.⁵⁰ While Hagerty was dealing with the most challenging task in his press secretary career, he was thinking of a way to deal proactively with this crisis situation. Simply stated, Eisenhower's heart attack crisis had to be dissected into two separate but equal parts. Hagerty's first mission was to accurately portray the recovery of his sixty-five year old boss, mentor and friend and then to convince everyone that the leader and symbol of the free world was physically, mentally and emotionally able to assume the reins of power in 1955 and lead America through his second term into a new decade.

Hagerty's first mission was being accomplished as Eisenhower improved daily and the media were constantly being briefed of his advances by him, White and Snyder. Hagerty now turned his full attention to accomplish mission number two, that of proving that Eisenhower was willing, ready and able to fully resume his presidential position. For this task Hagerty utilized his imagination, intelligence, knowledge of Ike, accessibility and his public

relations professionalism " ⁵¹ to convince Eisenhower and Adams that small presidential actions were major building blocks in Eisenhower's political recovery roadway. Eisenhower and Adams agreed with Hagerty's recommendations and the campaign began. Eisenhower's every accomplishment from writing his initials, signing his full name to conducting conferences with his senior White House and cabinet officials were fully explained by Hagerty in his daily media briefings. The symbolic political public relations power of the old World War II general hero giving everything he had to sign his name, initials and meet with his senior administration officials was a very convincing image to the world that Eisenhower may be down but he was not out and he was still in charge. "Hagerty portrayed to the American people that the American government was running smoothly under Ike." ⁵²

Hagerty did receive some criticism from a number of sources that he was in fact manipulating the media and misleading the public by telling the cabinet members exactly what to say after their presidential conferences. Unfortunately for Hagerty many people did witness him giving a cabinet member a prepared statement prior to the official's visit with Eisenhower. Hagerty sharply replied to his critics. "Sure, those press conferences were unusual but we put them on for a very simple reason. The president was getting better and we wanted to show he was taking up the reins. That was important not only for our country but for all the world." ⁵³

Hagerty's professional handling of the media in a candid manner during Eisenhower's heart attack contributed greatly to the dramatic rise in his credibility, influence and popularity with both the Eisenhower administration officials and the White House press corps. Even Charles Roberts and Douglass Cater who were perhaps the harshest critics of Hagerty, praised him for his

performance during Eisenhower's heart attack. "As critics pointed out that Ike's press secretary, James Hagerty employed enormous skills in press relations in order to convey the impression of activity at the White House even during periods when the president suffered the enforced idleness of serious illness." 54

Roberts added more graphic comments concerning Hagerty's influence,

Hagerty and White believed in leveling with us during the crisis in an honest, candid and straightforward manner. Additionally, where Hagerty was once only a water boy for the team, he is now one of its quarterbacks, calling signals for some of its name performers to execute. This was evidenced at Denver, during the press conferences designed to show that Ike was still in command, when such cabinet officers as Dulles and Wilson (two that I remember specifically) deferred to Jim for answers, or conferred with him before answering.⁵⁵

The praise for Hagerty's media handling performance during Eisenhower's heart attack was truly immense. Therefore the author has decided to discuss only a limited amount of positive accolades. White House correspondent Merriman Smith said, "Hagerty has done a truly phenomenal job in Denver. The sentiment was echoed by old timer Eddie Folliard, Washington Post and Times Herald, a veteran Washington reporter since the days of Coolidge, who called Hagerty the best press officer in the world, the best I have ever worked with." 56

Other White House correspondents gave similar high marks to Hagerty's performance. "Hagerty's handling of the press during both of Ike's illnesses is typical of his instincts during a crisis. By being completely frank he actually paved the way for public acceptance of Ike's announcement that he was well enough to run again." 57

A final word of praise comes from an editorial in The National Underwriter, the Institute of Life Insurance's official newsletter

Hagerty's handling of the president's heart attack and later his operation were excellent examples of sound public relations practices in the face of what must have been a tremendous temptation to conceal and distort. As a result, there were some who thought that maybe there was more frankness than necessary but certainly there were not fantastic whispered rumors as there were during the serious illnesses of presidents Wilson, Harding and Franklin D. Roosevelt for example.⁵⁸

In the final analysis, was James C. Hagerty's press secretary role in this crisis any different from those of the press secretaries under Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt during their presidents' crisis? Joseph Tumulty, President Wilson's press secretary, was totally denied access to him and was discredited in the media by Mrs. Wilson during her husband's second heart attack on October 2, 1919. She refused to allow anyone to see or meet with her husband during his heart attack. Tumulty's credibility with the media sunk to an all-time low because he knew absolutely nothing about Wilson's condition.⁵⁹ This was unfortunate, according to John Blum, author of Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era, because "he was the first secretary to have a flair for public relations."⁶⁰ Stephen Early, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's press secretary, a dedicated, top-notch journalism professional knew how to keep Roosevelt on the front page and radio. However, Early remained in the background allowing Roosevelt to control all press conferences with his charming, dynamic and charismatic personality.⁶¹

"... My hope is that these conferences are going to be merely enlarged editions of the kind of very delightful family conferences I have been holding in Albany for the last four years."⁶² Robert Rutland, in his Journalism Quarterly article "President Eisenhower and His Press Secretary" offers a very interesting comparison between Hagerty's and Early's authoritative ability to speak for their respective presidents by analyzing the Department of State files from 1933 to 1945 and again from 1952 to 1960.

He writes, "From 1933 to 1945 the Bulletin never quoted Steve Early. Truman's Charles Ross was never quoted and Joseph Short was cited only once. in contrast, Hagerty was quoted frequently, beginning in May, 1953." ⁶³ Based on Rutland's findings James Hagerty was Eisenhower's officially sanctioned and authorized spokesperson before his first heart attack. Unlike both Tumulty and Early who were blocked either by a lack of access or by the president's personality.

Why then did Hagerty have so much influence and authority in the Eisenhower administration during the president's first heart attack? Perhaps Sherman Adams, assistant to President Eisenhower, helps to explain this influence, "Probably more than anybody else in the president's official family, he relies on Jim for the testing of the new idea. He looks to him as the man to mirror the public reaction and in a large majority of cases would dispose of the matter then and there on the basis of Jim's judgment." ⁶⁴ Mrs. Ann Whitman, President Eisenhower's personal secretary offered another observation on Hagerty, "Usually, the answer the president gives is what Jim has been saying." ⁶⁵ Murray Snyder, Hagerty's assistant press secretary, says, "Jim has integrated himself into the president's thinking." ⁶⁶ Professor Ambrose, during an interview with him, describes why Hagerty was an influential member of Eisenhower's team. He said,

Hagerty's authority and influence came from a number of factors. First, he was a top notch public relations professional who could make solid, quick decisions. Next, Ike liked and respected him a great deal. Thirdly, Ike utilized Hagerty as an effective buffer between he and the media. Finally, Hagerty had total access to Ike and his complete trust. ⁶⁷

General (retired) Andrew Goodpaster, secretary of the White House staff, during an interview with the author further clarified Hagerty's influence in the Eisenhower administration.

He had a very important influence on the president's policy making decisions. Jim had two major roles during Ike's first attack. First, he insisted that there would be full disclosure of Ike's medical condition during his recovery. Second, he had to assure the American people that President Eisenhower was physically able to confidently run the United States government. ⁶⁸

Further evidence of Hagerty's prominence and influence in the Eisenhower administration are plentiful and thought provoking, yet only one man could give Hagerty his status and that person was President Eisenhower himself. "At cabinet and White House staff meetings, the president, having listened to arguments on both sides of an issue, was likely to say, 'Let's hear what Jim thinks.'" ⁶⁹ Another example of Hagerty's powerful status was his usage of the expression 'we have decided,' when speaking to the White House press corps.

The discerning listener could have gathered that there was far more to the press secretary's performance than mouthing lines fed him by others. That was evident from the way he kept referring to the president, the administration, or himself, interchangeably, in the first person plural : 'We also signed today...' This Freudian slip was understandable for it is a key fact of the Eisenhower Administration's life that Hagerty does not merely dispense news. He also makes it. ⁷⁰

One of the main reasons for Hagerty's principal status was his close father-son like relationship between he and President Eisenhower. "Hag and Ike came together rather late, so it was a remarkable fit. Hag gets a lot of credit for knowing Ike's personality." ⁷¹ This relationship was further explained by Charles Roberts, "The Ike-Hagerty relationship was a paternalistic one. Hagerty worshipped Eisenhower." ⁷² Therefore, it was Eisenhower who gave Hagerty his dominant, credible administration posture. "Jim has been largely responsible for the complexion of the administration," ⁷³ said Sherman Adams, Eisenhower's Chief of Staff. Eisenhower needed a strong, take charge press secretary who would run his media operations along

military lines, give him total loyalty and provide meaningful public relations advice on all decisions. Hagerty was his man for this difficult mission.

Hagerty relished his opportunities to assist his boss in every decision he made during his eight year term no matter what the administration policy topic. "He was involved in policy as it related to the public." ⁷⁴ After all, every policy decision made affected one or all of the many American publics of the 1950's. "Hagerty's opinion is a vital and sometimes determining factor."⁷⁵ His policy making involvement was still another link in the chain of closeness with the president and he was also one of four closest advisors along with Sherman Adams, Jerry Persons, Andrew J. Goodpaster." ⁷⁶

Even Douglass Cater, a harsh Hagerty critic, agreed on his policy influence, "It's true that the president, we are told, relies a great deal on Hagerty for the advice that he needs to have." ⁷⁷ One final proof of evidence on Hagerty's policy making role is revealed in an October 8, 1956 memo to President Eisenhower from James Hagerty. In it he proposed, "Somehow the American people and the people of the world expect the President of the United States to do something dramatic, even drastic, to prevent at all possible costs, another war." ⁷⁸ Hagerty continued by outlining to Eisenhower seven possible 1956 world peace suggestions. The first suggestion was utilized by the president in his October 31, 1956 live national TV broadcast, "Issue immediately from the White House a presidential statement re-stating America's position, detailing our step by step moves to keep the Suez peace." ⁷⁹

Finally, James Hagerty has many qualities worth emulating by future presidential press secretaries such as professionalism, outstanding

communication skills, total access, credibility, loyalty, knowledge of multiple topics and the ability to tell the truth. The most important of these was his loyalty to the president. This quality coupled with the president's total trust and confidence in his everyday operations formed a bond of complete cooperation thereby protecting Hagerty from losing his mighty position. Hagerty best summed up this crucial quality in this manner, "I'm not working for the newspapers. I'm working for the President of the United States. If you know you're doing your job to the best of your ability, to hell with 'em!" ⁸⁰

James C. Hagerty gave President Dwight D. Eisenhower his best for eight years and every press secretary subsequently has tried to equal his influence, access and power. Hagerty, during an interview with Gordon Ames Moon, III, a masters' student at the University of Wisconsin, described the reasons for his success. Hagerty said,

First, attention to detail is very important in everything I do; Second, informing myself of the problems that I have to handle now and in the future; third, I made it a point not to lie, or try to kid the newsmen. If I didn't want to answer a question, I'd tell them. I didn't try to invent the answer to questions I didn't know; fourth, a press secretary must be available, he must have an open door for all queries; and finally, this was important. But I would add, and this is by far most important, you must have a complete, frank informal working relationship with your boss. Eisenhower did me the great honor of treating me just like that. ⁸¹

Hagerty knew that his relationship with Eisenhower gave him the elevated administration position that he enjoyed for eight years with other White House staffers, the media, Congress and the American people. Without Eisenhower's support, he had no dominion to oversee. "The White House, as one former Hagerty fan Eddie Folliard of the Washington Post, has said in print, has become 'a dull place' to work. James Campbell Hagerty in sum has done his job not wisely but too well." ⁸²

His policy making role in the Eisenhower administration is evident. He did make policy but only when it had public relations implications which comprised the majority of the decisions. Therefore, Hagerty's influence on Eisenhower, his presidency and American life in the 1950's was dramatic and significant. All things considered, "Press secretary Hagerty cannot by the very nature of his job, manufacture a presidential record. He can only reflect what President Eisenhower does in its best light. In his ability to do just that, James Campbell Hagerty, first of the professional presidential press secretaries, may never be surpassed." 83

Endnotes

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- ²Ibid; James C. Hagerty to Professor Richard P. Longaker, August 14, 1956, in James C. Hagerty Papers, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.
- ³Noel Clark, "James C. Hagerty," The London Daily Mail February 4, 1956.
- ⁴Eisenhower, Mandate For Change, 538.
- ⁵Robert H. Ferrell (ed.), The Diary of James C. Hagerty, (Bloomington, Indiana: 1983), 234; Stephen E. Ambrose, Nixon Vol. I (New York: 1987)371-372.
- ⁶Thomas E. Cronin., The State of the Presidency, 2d ed., (Boston: 1980) 393. This amendment clarifies what happens when a president is disabled and the vice president becomes president.
- ⁷George E. Reedy, The Twilight of the Presidency (New York, 1970) 172.
- ⁸Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower, 2, The President (New York: 1984)9.
- ⁹Author's Interview with Dr. Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower's biographer, January 28, 1990 Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.
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- ¹¹Ferrell (ed.) The Diary of James C. Hagerty, xvi.
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- ¹⁴William C. Spragens with Carole Ann Terwoord, Press Secretary: White House Press Operations (Washington, D.C., 1980) 6-7.
- ¹⁵Michael Baruch Grossman and Martha Joynt Kumar, Portraying the President: The White House and the News Media (Baltimore, 1981) 148.

- ¹⁶ Larry Speakes to the author, Joe Trahan, April 26, 1985.
- ¹⁷ Author's Interview with Stephen Hess, former Eisenhower staffer, March 16, 1990, Washington, D.C.; unpublished master's thesis, The University of Wisconsin, 1962, 148.
- ¹⁸ James C. Hagerty's letter to Toni Brewster, March 30, 1955, Hagerty Papers, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.
- ¹⁹ R. Lovell, "Keepers of the Flame", The Quill (February, 1981)p.9.
- ²⁰ Author's Interview with Robert Pierpoint, former CBS-TV White House correspondent, March 15, 1990 Washington, D.C.
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- ²⁶ Cabell Phillips, "Speaker of the White House", New York Times December 8, 1956, p.12.
- ²⁷ Author's Interview with Stephen Hess, March 16, 1990.
- ²⁸ Transcript, James C. Hagerty oral history interview, January 31, 1968, 218-19, Columbia University History Collection Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.
- ²⁹ Author's Interview with Bryson Rash, former NBC-TV White House correspondent, March 16, 1990 Washington, D.C.
- ³⁰ Author's Interview with Stephen Hess, March 16, 1990.
- ³¹ Douglas Larsen, "Ike's News Chief, Candid Jim Hagerty Ranks as History's Top Press Agent," Augusta Georgia Herald, February 15, 1957, 1.

- ³² Author's Interview with Dr. Stephen E. Ambrose, January, 28, 1990.
- ³³ Author's Interview with Robert Pierpoint, March 15, 1990.
- ³⁴ Unpublished James C. Hagerty speech, given to the Womens' National Press Club on April 17, 1958, located in the Hagerty Papers, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.
- ³⁵ London Daily Mail, February 4, 1956.
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- ³⁸ Gordon Ames Moon, III's interview with James C. Hagerty on August 22, 1961 in New York City, located in Moon's unpublished master's thesis, The University of Wisconsin, 1962, 146-147. The thesis is located with the Hagerty Papers, The Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas.
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- ⁴¹ Milton Mackaye, "Ike's Man Friday", The Saturday Evening Post, May 21, 1960, p57.
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- ⁴³ James Deakin, "Hagerty: Voice Behind the Throne", New Republic, 135, August 27, 1956, pp. 7-9
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- ⁴⁶ Merriman Smith, "Why I told the Truth About Ike's Illness", This Week January 15, 1956, 28.

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EISENHOWER'S PYRRHIC VICTORY IN 1956:
MIXED LESSONS FROM THE FIRST NATIONAL TV CAMPAIGN

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Eisenhower's Pyrrhic Victory in 1956:

Mixed Lessons From the First National TV Campaign

Mass communication history is at its best when it tangles with questions pertaining to origins of the respective media; many scholars fascinated by the development of television have found side excursions through the world of politics to be irresistible. Many historical studies of political television reinforce a view that politics reflects a round-house clout in television and that TV has been a determinate in several modern elections. Popular examples are the many writings on John Kennedy's use of television in his 1960 election, Richard Nixon's image-oriented campaign in 1968 and Ronald Reagan's electronic successes in 1980 and 1984.¹

Yet politicians have been quicker than media historians in realizing that television is not an electoral panacea. Television in fact has limitations as a vote-getting device, and media scholars can enrich their conclusions about the evolution of the medium with a better understanding of occasions in which television did not meet expectations in the political arena. The often-overlooked Eisenhower era is fertile ground for television historians because it was during Eisenhower's two terms (1953-1961) that TV took on the pervasive, nationwide dimensions familiar today. Politicians in the 1950s were among the first to chart the explosive growth of television and jump to the initial conclusions that the medium

had herculean potential in swaying voters. By the end of the 1950s however, at least in the political world, some of those conclusions were dramatically revised.

What may stand as the best composite study of this early political television learning curve is the 1956 Republican Congressional campaign, in which party records and materials available at the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas, reveal that the GOP threw millions of dollars into a nationwide television effort aimed at helping party candidates other than those on the national ticket. The party's lever in 1956 was Eisenhower, whose overwhelming public popularity carried him to a landslide victory over Adlai Stevenson that year. The 1956 strategy marked the first major attempt to integrate "old" and "new" politics: the "old" reflected in the notion that a popular national standard bearer could generate support for other party office seekers; the "new" being the assumption that television could extend those political coattails. This thinking did not help the Republicans. The party suffered setbacks in hundreds of state and local races and its defeats in House and Senate contests left Eisenhower the first victorious president in 108 years to lose both sides of Congress.

The Republican Congressional campaign of 1956 has helped scholars probe some of Eisenhower's weaknesses as a political leader while bringing focus to more recent questions pertaining to the GOP's on-going failures at winning majorities in Congress. Yet 1956 contains equally vital insights for media historians as it isolates a key dimension of politics in the television age: the realization that television, while effective in promoting individual candidates such as Eisenhower, did not work well in selling a political party. Thus it is no surprise that many scholars see a decline in the power of the two parties that coincided with the rise of

television.² The 1956 campaign also showed that the impact of television was not simply inherent in the new medium, but was rather the product of correct decisions about TV made by people behind the scenes. Although Republican options were limited in 1956, the outcome hinted that television might not always be the best choice in a political campaign.

1. Political Purposes and the New Medium

The 1950s were as much television years as they were Eisenhower years; this was because most Americans had to wait until that decade to begin their love affair with the new medium. The TV revolution might have begun sooner, but it was because of TV's great appeal that the Federal Communications Commission in 1948 imposed a moratorium on television licensing; four years went by before the FCC settled on a way to allocate television frequencies among hundreds of cities and towns then wanting service. Although the licensing "freeze" ended in April 1952, several additional months passed before the FCC broke through a logjam of competing applications. In 1953, Eisenhower's first year in office, the cross section of American homes using television soared from thirty-three to fifty percent. When Eisenhower was reelected in 1956 television could be found in seventy percent of American homes; when he left office in 1961, TV penetration was around ninety percent.³

Besides reflecting the obvious popularity of television, the Eisenhower years witnessed an important milestone in TV's evolution: virtual completion of a national system of distribution. When the "freeze" ended in 1952, television was available in just sixty-two cities in thirty-five states. Only three years later, close to 200 cities had stations and TV was available in all forty-eight states. Cable television saw its first

major growth during this period; by 1955, 400 cable systems brought service to locales outside the coverage limits of the over-the-air stations.⁴

The Eisenhower administration followed the growth of television very closely. Millions of Americans, and most Democratic politicians, were encountering TV for the first time. By contrast, the Republicans already had mature ties to the television field. Among Eisenhower's closest personal friends were CBS President William Paley, NBC Chairman David Sarnoff and Time-Life President Henry Luce, whose company was then beginning what was destined to be a television empire.⁵ The administration also learned about television through its numerous connections to Madison Avenue. Another of Eisenhower's friends was Sigurd Larmon, head of the giant Young and Rubicam ad agency. The Republican National Committee, meanwhile, could afford a retainer arrangement with the Batten Barton Durstine and Osborne agency, initiated after BBDO's pioneering TV work for Eisenhower in the 1952 campaign.

It was politics, not informal intrigue about the new medium, the spurred this early Republican interest in television and moved the party toward an electronic strategy in 1956. The Republican party at large was listless and catatonic in the early 1950s, unattractive to millions of Americans who knew the party for its vehement conservative calls for isolationism and its attacks on Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal policies. The Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan reported in 1952 that only thirty percent of American voters called themselves Republicans, compared to more than fifty percent who considered themselves Democrats; that year, Eisenhower was elected president only because millions of Democrats crossed party lines to vote for the popular war hero.⁶

These weaknesses in the Republican party impacted directly on Eisenhower through many frustrated dealings with Congress. Eisenhower's victory in 1952 had brought slim Republican majorities in the House and Senate, but Eisenhower, a moderate, was unable to work with the party's influential and flamboyant conservatives, notably Senator John Bricker, who battled the administration over his plan to limit presidential treaty authority, and Joseph McCarthy, whose anti-communist crusade offended Eisenhower and made the president appear weak and ineffectual.⁷ A perception the party was in disarray contributed to GOP defeats in the 1954 mid-term elections, which left both the House and Senate in Democratic hands and created greater torment for Eisenhower. Nineteen-fifty-five was a difficult year, as the Democrats fought hard with the administration over tax cuts, farm price supports, increased postal spending and a higher minimum wage.

Eisenhower was convinced his legacy as president depended on his ability to rejuvenate his party. Some were puzzled by this assessment, believing Eisenhower could execute his programs equally well through a coalition of moderates in both parties. Yet Eisenhower once criticized confidant Henry Cabot Lodge, who told him in 1954 that partisanship was irrelevant when the public had unswerving trust in the President. "I earnestly wanted a Republican Congress," insisted Eisenhower.⁸ Because his most consistent support in Congress actually did come from Republicans, Eisenhower did not believe the party was in disarray, and he sensed a public relations problem.⁹ Some journalists, for example, were cynical when Eisenhower befriended Senator Robert Taft, one of the most vocal of the GOP conservatives, who lost the 1952 nomination to Eisenhower in 1952; Taft's death in 1953 was taken hard by the administration.

Eisenhower's solution was a program "so dynamic, so forward-looking, and so adapted to the needs of the United States" that a loyal party member "would have a distinct advantage."¹⁰ On many occasions, Eisenhower referred to this new image as "Modern Republicanism."

Eisenhower also concluded that he alone must advance Modern Republicanism. When Eisenhower ran for president in 1952, his plan was to serve one term and retire; considering it took less than four years to defeat the Germans in World War II, Eisenhower calculated that one term would be sufficient to jumpstart the beleaguered Republican party. This thinking changed, however, when Eisenhower sized up the array of prominent Republicans, including Vice President Richard Nixon, and concluded that none were capable of being elected president in the next election. A turning point was the party's lackluster performance in the 1954 elections. Just four weeks later, Eisenhower let it be known privately he was planning to run again in 1956.¹¹

With Eisenhower on the ticket, 1956 was a critical year for the party. His reelection seemed certain, but there was uncertainty about 1960 and beyond. Even if Eisenhower could be persuaded to work for the party and continue to forestall retirement, he would not again head a GOP ticket. This was because Eisenhower was the first president affected by the 22nd Amendment that limited White House tenure to two terms. Thus, 1956 shaped up as a final foreseeable opportunity to lash the fortunes of Republican office seekers to an invincible national ticket.

These stakes in 1956 were clearly understood at the headquarters of the Republican National Committee. For three decades, nothing better reflected the regressive state of the party than the antique, revolving-door operation at the RNC. Although he had opponents in the GOP, Eisen-

hower kept the national committee on a short leash; people there knew that the President's Modern Republicanism was as much a management directive as it was a political slogan. Eisenhower's order to party headquarters was to modernize and shape up. In the 1940s, the party had been chaired by ultra-conservative Guy Gabrielson, a zealot for Senator Taft. In 1952, Arthur Summerfield headed the party long enough to get Eisenhower elected; Wesley Roberts then served four additional months as chairman in 1953.¹² Eisenhower got results, however, under Leonard W. Hall, a seven-term New York Congressman who once headed the influential Republican Congressional Campaign Committee. Hall fired many of the four-dozen staff members he inherited and reassigned others. He then obtained new offices for the RNC and began a rapid expansion; 130 people were on his payroll by 1956.¹³

Hall was responsible for fundraising and organization, but his element was campaign strategy. It did not take long before it was apparent that a centerpiece of the modernized, new look at headquarters was Hall's bold embrace of television. Hall felt that time and effort could be saved with massive applications of the new medium and that it could substitute for grassroots vote-getting operations the party desperately needed in many locales, especially the South and border states. Hall talked about television so often that New York Times columnist James Reston portrayed Hall in 1955 as a political Milton Berle.¹⁴

Important parts of the 1956 GOP television strategy were in place more than a year before the election. The party budgeted around \$3 million on TV in 1956, twice as much as in 1952. By mid-1955, much of that money had been spent on numerous choice blocks of network airtime during the fall campaign. Further, advance airtime purchases led to an innovation: five-minute "piggybacks" appeals that played after shortened

prime time entertainment programs. Hall was pleased. These "piggybacks" were an alternative to tiring half-hour speeches used in 1952, and they gave the Republicans an advantage over the Democrats, who did not begin serious talks with the networks until the spring of 1956.¹⁵

The Republican TV commitment was a clue the party was thinking inventively about the Congressional races. Although House and Senate campaigns were run by state committees and local organizations, national headquarters was active in them, especially in presidential years. The prevailing "coattail" theory maintained that presidential candidates must travel to the hinterlands and conduct whistle-stop tours with the local candidates; presidential standard-bearers conducted at least some whistle-stopping in almost every campaign since 1900.¹⁶

Yet Hall had reason to believe this strategy was not as effective as it once was. Eisenhower had stumped for GOP candidates in 1954 without much success, and crowds had been smaller than in previous years. Hall surmised that television may have been a factor, that people preferred the living room comfort of Ed Sullivan or "I Love Lucy" to crowded and noisy campaign rallies.¹⁷ Hall also reasoned that TV could overcome drawbacks in whistle-stopping. A candidate, for example, could only attract a few hundred spectators at a personal appearance, compared to millions on TV. Moreover, a candidate could only appear in one locale at a time. An appearance with a local candidate in September might be forgotten by November, a shortcoming eliminated by continuous use of television.¹⁸

It was because of Eisenhower that a novel approach to the 1956 campaign became necessary. This came on September 24, 1955, when Eisenhower suffered a heart attack at the end of a working vacation in Denver. Eisenhower was not back in the White House until December, and it was not

until the following February 29th that he formally announced his intention to run. The heart attack, a blow to the party and the nation, expedited the television concept. Just two days after it occurred, with the President still in critical condition, Hall unflinchingly predicted that Eisenhower would head the ticket; the Chairman stood firm when a reporter said, "You're nuts."¹⁹ Hall helped fulfill his prophecy, however, by explaining to Eisenhower, in the weeks before he decided to run, that the emerging TV plans would eliminate extensive travel.²⁰

11. Television Strategy and the "Big Vote Premise"

Television succeeded as a travel substitute for the infirm president. Four years before, Eisenhower has whistle-stopped through hundreds of cities and towns scattered along a 53,000-mile campaign route. In the 1956 fall campaign, he ventured from the White House only ten times; six of those trips featured massive nationally-televised campaign rallies.²¹ Most of Eisenhower's campaigning was done on TV from the White House in paid appeals and, certainly, in his weekly news conferences, which Eisenhower had brought to home screens for the first time in 1955. The President's TV appearances were masterpieces of timing and organization. Above all, though, the sixty-six-year-old Eisenhower looked robust and healthy on television, making it difficult for the Democrats to exploit questions about his age and health.²²

It was largely because television worked well in the presidential phase of the campaign that Republican planners were confident TV would meet the other test in 1956, that of converting the Eisenhower phenomena into votes in state and district races. Americans were introduced to this two-prong TV strategy at the Republican Convention in San Francisco, when

the party successfully wagered that viewers would stay tuned as dozens of House and Senate candidates were laboriously introduced to a national audience just prior to Eisenhower's acceptance speech.

Subsequent TV tactics were detailed days later, when the RNC circulated a forty-seven page campaign plan that called for "maximum utilization of television." Strategy was to break "completely with past experience by placing first importance on effective use of television instead of the traditional emphasis on personal appearances."²³ Chairman Hall supervised the plan and it was written by two other RNC figures knowledgeable about the new medium.²⁴ These were Robert Humphreys, who worked his way to the RNC's No. 2 position through the public relations ranks, and Publicity Director Richard Guylay, a former advertising executive whose study of political imagery was used by Vance Packard in his 1957 best-seller The Hidden Persuaders.²⁵ This strategy was heavily influenced by the powerful Republican flank on Madison Avenue. In a year when the Democrats had few takers for their ad account, GOP efforts were guided by both BBDO and Young and Rubicam, the world's second and third largest agencies. Young and Rubicam entered the picture when Sig Larmon, its president and Eisenhower's close friend, volunteered the agency to the Citizens for Eisenhower, a nationwide amalgam of volunteers separate from the RNC. Despite a rivalry, BBDO and Young and Rubicam provided the Republicans some of the best television expertise then available.

The agencies convinced those at headquarters that Republican House and Senate candidates would benefit if on-air appeals revolved around Eisenhower and targeted Democrats and independents, millions of whom were already backing Eisenhower based on their polling data. The massive GOP television schedule would build on Eisenhower's esteem in order to run up

his vote total against Stevenson, a concept known officially as "the big vote premise."²⁶ It assumed that a roiling wave of support for the national ticket would transfer to other candidates.

Getting this across on TV hinged on a sort of mass reverse psychology. For more than two decades, sharp ideological differences characterized dialogue between the two parties. As the opposition party, the GOP was known for its loud contempt for Roosevelt's New Deal and internationalism, at a time when print and radio were the dominant mass media. Now through television they would see a different Republican party, one of compassion, vision, fortitude and patriotism. With TV imagery, the Democratic party would appear cemented to the 1930s and 1940s, while the Republicans looked to the future.

In August and September, Eisenhower had almost daily contact with the ad agency planners and their strategy pleased him because it was a living room manifesto for Modern Republicanism. In 1952, Eisenhower had led the party with the combative slogan "Korea, communism and corruption"; that year, his TV appeals, produced by hard-sell advocate Rosser Reeves, displayed this fighting spirit. The 1956 theme of "peace, prosperity and progress" put a shine on the new image Eisenhower had long sought for the party.²⁷

Both Young and Rubicam and BBDO had campaign coordinators; each remembered years later the "big vote premise" of 1956 and unending concerns about the House and Senate races. "The Citizens for Eisenhower was there to help Ike," recalled Young and Rubicam's David Levy, "but we realized the party itself was at stake. Television was important in '56 because it was a tool the Democrats really didn't have."²⁸ BBDO's Carroll Newton likewise noted dual priorities. "The national committee's job was

to elect the damn president, but [in 1956] it bore responsibility for the Congressional and Senatorial campaigns." According to Newton, the party's attempt to use national television in the mid-term elections in 1954, something that had never been done, was a concept BBDO tried to perfect.²⁹

The prominent role of the Congressional races in the scheme of the party's TV strategy was underscored in the first appeals produced by the Republicans in 1956. It was a fifteen-minute film series entitled "These Peaceful, Prosperous Years," one part of which focused on an average family "going about their daily lives under a Republican era of peace." To climax the upbeat theme, the President and Mrs. Eisenhower sang an on-camera rendition of "God Bless America" before a narrator urged voters to "Give Ike a Republican Congress." The production was rounded out when several House and Senate candidates were invited to a TV studio set up by BBDO at the Capitol to record introductions. Various versions were sent by BBDO to television stations in the candidates' home districts.³⁰

"These Peaceful, Prosperous Years," which the public saw beginning in early September, was but one phase of the party's cumbersome attempt to target specific races with TV. Besides a huge network schedule, BBDO had bargained for airtime on many local stations and many local segments, some as short as twenty seconds, were filled with slick, often custom-made appeals fashioned in New York. One half of the \$3 million the Republicans spent on TV in 1956 was disbursed locally, a noteworthy proportion as the Democrats used only one-quarter of their \$2.3 television budget for the same task.³¹

The Republicans directed localized TV campaigns from national headquarters because the party felt TV was too important to leave to local organizations and small ad agencies. Expertise in political television

was almost non-existent except at the national level in the largest television markets. In fact, indications of a local TV knowledge gap were evident in late 1955, when the party summoned the forty-eight state committee chairs to Washington for a week-long "campaign school." Although there were panels on time-buying and TV production techniques, most of the school dealt with free airtime availabilities and candidate cosmetics.³² Madison Avenue effects were left to Madison Avenue.

With Eisenhower at the head of the ticket, this task of targeting specific campaigns was considered doable. In the House, the party needed to retain its 203 seats and pick up fifteen more to achieve a majority; the Republicans had added twenty-two seats when Eisenhower ran in 1952. There was more hope in the Senate, where the party needed just two seats for a majority. The Republicans threw a substantial amount of their TV resources into the states of Oregon, Colorado, Washington and Pennsylvania. In Oregon, Douglas McKay was attempting to unseat GOP expatriate Wayne Morse; McKay was Eisenhower's Interior Secretary until the President convinced him he would be of more help on Capitol Hill. In Colorado, popular Governor Dan Thornton had been persuaded by Eisenhower to seek a Senate seat. The same was true in Washington, where Arthur Langlie was coaxed into challenging Warren Magnuson. In Pennsylvania, James Duff, one of Eisenhower's most fervent supporters, sought reelection to the Senate. These candidates, personally anointed by the President, were to be spear carriers for Eisenhower's Modern Republicanism in the next Congress.

Toward the end of September, with most of the local appeals completed, attention shifted to the national phase of the campaign and its imperative of linking Eisenhower's aspirations to those of other Republican candidates. On September 24, the nation saw the people of Peoria,

Illinois, cheer Eisenhower, Senator Everett Dirksen and other GOP candidates. On October 1, another wildly enthusiastic crowd greeted Eisenhower, this time in Lexington, Kentucky, where two Senate seats were at stake; GOP contenders John Sherman Cooper and Thruston Morton appeared on national TV with the President. On October 9, Eisenhower was seen receiving the adulation of a crowd in Pittsburgh, with Duff and some Pennsylvania House candidates in attendance. The following week, Eisenhower conducted a three-day trip to the West; his appearances with Langlie in Seattle, McKay in Portland and Thornton in Denver provided more television opportunities.³³

Not only did these remote television rallies convey a healthy Eisenhower busily engaged in a traveling campaign. They were also designed to leave the impression that infectious support existed for Eisenhower and the list of Republican candidates. Farmers, for example, were irate at Eisenhower for his failure to expand price supports. The Republicans traditionally struggled south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Nevertheless, if Eisenhower and the party were weak in the farm belt or the border states, it would have been impossible for the rest of the nation to tell based on the telecasts seen from Peoria and Lexington.

Moreover, these remote appearances necessitated an innocuous political discourse that the agencies urged in promoting the Modern Republicanism. Eisenhower seldom spoke with definition on regional issues, such as farm prices or hydroelectric power, because they had little nationwide sparkle. Eisenhower made short speeches on TV. "The President should stop, talk and [then] go to the main stage," stated a BBDO campaign directive. "The whole idea is to bring the President's conversation a little closer to the public."³⁴ In each speech, Eisenhower urged Repub-

lican votes in House and Senate races because the GOP alone had a vision for the future.

The use of subtle, emotional messages and the apolitical "peace, prosperity and progress" theme, apparent in Eisenhower's remote appearances, was even more integral to the Young and Rubicam productions for the Citizens. These were directed by David Levy. While earlier BBDO productions were tailored to geographic locations, Young and Rubicam used national TV to isolate key demographic groups. Young people comprised one such group, and Levy designed five-minute programs that focused on college life, in which students took turns praising Eisenhower's leadership.³⁵ Women inspired an appeal that highlighted Mamie Eisenhower. "Women will decide the election," began a female announcer, "and they like Ike. . . . and here's something else they like -- Ike's beloved Mamie."³⁶ The President himself had suggested the Mamie spot, figuring it would help voters to recall Stevenson's 1949 divorce.³⁷

These programs hit the air beginning October 15; single appeals, if they followed popular programs such as "The \$64,000 Question" and "I've Got A Secret," drew twenty-five percent of the nation's TV homes.³⁸ The viewing public also saw Eisenhower affirm Modern Republicanism in a mock TV news conference, in which average people asked the President rehearsed questions.³⁹ A television party celebrating Eisenhower's 66th birthday was hosted by Helen Hayes and James Stewart, who joined other Hollywood celebrities in urging Republican votes.⁴⁰ A daytime TV coffee klatsch featured Eisenhower mixing with women at the White House; he told them a Republican Congress would be sensitive to needs of the American family.⁴¹ Young people and women were not the only groups made to feel comfortable; blacks appeared prominently in almost every TV appeal.

111. Portents of Congressional Defeat

Mid-October brought the first indications that TV was not working in the Congressional phase of the campaign. Local polling showed several key Republican candidates, including Duff and Thornton, falling behind Democratic opponents. In every region, meanwhile, support for Republican House and Senate candidates lagged behind that for Eisenhower.⁴² This was confirmed in weekly tracking research conducted by BBDO through its field offices, as well as an RNC progress report that pointed to growing apathy in the campaigns of many GOP House candidates who were trailing badly.⁴³

More noteworthy, though, were the dozens of Republicans locked in close races who were visibly restless with the TV effort. Requests poured into Washington from almost every state organization pleading for Eisenhower visits. "We cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of having President Eisenhower stop at Phoenix," wrote the Arizona committee. From Louisiana, "We have worked with all our hearts [and] respectfully request you appear no matter how briefly." From South Carolina, ". . . we are still part of the United States."⁴⁴

Eisenhower was aware of this. It was his decision, not that of the national committee, to undertake a series of one-day airport tours to bolster several local campaigns. Nevertheless, international developments negated this brief diversion from the electronic strategy. Eisenhower was midway through his first tour, into Florida and Virginia, when he learned that British and French forces were invading Egypt to regain the Suez Canal, which Egypt had seized in July. As this happened, rebel factions were attempting to oust pro-Soviet leadership in Hungary; within days, thousands of Hungarians were killed as 200,000 Soviet troops rolled toward Budapest. Personal appearances that Eisenhower planned with GOP candid-

ates in Oklahoma, Missouri, Texas, Georgia, Tennessee, Connecticut and Massachusetts were cancelled.

These foreign hostilities, long anticipated by the administration, were not a blessing to Republican strategists. Because his military background was unmatched by Stevenson, Eisenhower benefitted from the deteriorating international situation, but this was a negative dimension and one not easily transferred to the party by television. The public, in fact, knew the Republican party was split over foreign policy, with sentiment ranging from that of isolationist John Bricker, still in the Senate, to others on Capitol Hill who insisted Eisenhower send troops to Hungary and the Middle East. Stevenson, not making headway in the campaign, nonetheless underscored these divisions in numerous speeches.

With Eisenhower now preoccupied with diplomatic maneuvers in Washington, television became more important than ever to the campaign. Hall remained confident as still to come in the closing phase was a living room blitz of appeals and appearances. The final week of the TV campaign got off to a good start for the party, when Eisenhower used free airtime on October 31 to address the nation and affirm his decision not to intervene in the foreign conflicts; a disjointed response by Stevenson the following night may have cinched Eisenhower's victory.

Millions of people witnessed the October 31 address, as well as a parade of partisan prime time messages that followed in the final six days before the election. Mamie and the college students were seen again and again. The Republicans tried as best they could to profit from the world crises, with additional spots that played up the "peace" component of "peace, prosperity and progress." One juxtaposed the horrors of the Korean War with a buoyant scene at a football game, emphasizing how Eisen-

hower's commitment to world peace touched average Americans.⁴⁵ Another featured a Washington, D.C., taxi driver walking his dog at night in Lafayette Park. Pausing by a lamppost, the cabbie spied a lighted window across the street at the White House. "A neighbor of mine lives there. Yep, Dwight Eisenhower, a man with the most important job in the world." Ominous scenes faded into pictures of happy and productive workers, farmers and homemakers who enjoyed the fruits of Modern Republicanism and had few worries about war with Eisenhower on watch. Importantly, every filmed production ended with an appeal to "all thinking voters -- regardless of party."⁴⁶

Updated research offered a tiny bit of hope in the Congressional races. Republican pollster George Gallup reported approval of Eisenhower's handling of the Middle East crisis such that the President's lead over Stevenson soared from ten to eighteen points (52-42 to 57-39); a fraction of Eisenhower's increasing margin, if it converted, would be sufficient to bring several Republican House and Senate candidates into office.⁴⁷ A survey conducted by Paul Gary Hoffman indicated that independent voters in several regions already favoring the President were starting to move to the Republican column elsewhere, and that they needed some final "assurance" from Eisenhower.⁴⁸

There continued to be little assurance from the national organization anywhere but on television. Eisenhower made a quick trip to Philadelphia for a final BBDO rally November 1. Then on November 5 he and Nixon appeared in an hour-long election eve program from the White House that was telecast on all three networks. The program was innovative, and through advanced use of live television it attempted one last time to mix the national and local goals of the Republican campaign. Viewers were

taken to cities coast to coast, where reporters detailed crescendos of support for Eisenhower and local House and Senate candidates as if the returns were already coming in. To enhance the effect, Young and Rubicam recruited NBC newsmen John Cameron Swayze to host the program.⁴⁹

Over seven million homes tuned to the election eve broadcast, part of the 120 million per-household impressions the Republicans made on television during the final week of the campaign. In advertising terms, this was a substantial showing because there were only forty-five million total TV homes; the Democrats had made only half as many impressions.⁵⁰ The selling job, however, proved only half successful.

iv. "We Still Have Much to Learn . . ."

Although Eisenhower carried forty-one states and claimed fifty-eight percent of the popular vote, the sixth-largest presidential landslide up to that time, the President was deeply dismayed by the Congressional results. It had actually been a standoff; the Democrats kept their 49-47 margin in the Senate and gained only two seats in the House, increasing their majority to 231-201. Eisenhower's bewilderment was not simply the realization he was not only the first victorious president in more than a century to yield both houses of Congress. He was perturbed because numerous Republican moderates, including Senate candidates Duff, McKay, Langlie and Thornton, were defeated. In a spasm of frustration on election night, Eisenhower reportedly spoke of advancing Modern Republicanism in a new political party.⁵¹

Eisenhower was slow to realize he had not been a savior to the Republicans, unable to repeat, for example, what Franklin Roosevelt accomplished for the Democrats in the 1930s. In 1958, the bottom fell out

of Modern Republicanism as the party lost forty-seven seats in the House and fifteen more in the Senate.⁵² Eisenhower's failure in eight years as president to fortify the Republican party remains a foremost question in recent political history; the same question has confronted historians of the Nixon and Reagan eras.

Media historians less concerned about political ramifications can nonetheless learn much from the way Eisenhower and his associates set campaign priorities at this seminal period in the television era. Heavy use of TV had not been a mistake; it proved necessary because of Eisenhower's limited personal role in the campaign. What failed was the assumption, widespread at the time, that the new medium had the power to perform a partisan quick fix. Few politicians seemed to agree with this assumption more than Eisenhower. When the 1956 results were in, Eisenhower was still inclined to believe that mass persuasion through public outlets such as television was the expeditious means of conducting politics. Only a week after the election, for example, he discussed Modern Republicanism with CBS president and close friend William Paley and told him, "The selling to the American public of this conversion has not been so well done."⁵³

Yet the miracle of television had limits. The party's most severe problem was weak, ineffectual grassroots organization, something television could do little to surmount. In 1956, the GOP tried to recruit new members through television appeals, thus sidestepping precinct, district, county and state committees that could have done this more effectively. Television likewise failed to correct a candidate recruiting problem. Twenty-two House contests had no Republican candidates; in many other races, GOP contenders were enlisted virtually off the street and were

easily defeated by familiar Democrats. In addition, it was largely because of television preoccupations that the national committee made a severe mistake: not capitalizing on the Citizens for Eisenhower organization. The Citizens handled television duties but it also attracted thousands of volunteers. The professionals at national headquarters, though, had little serious interest in the amateurs who ran the Citizens; had the RNC extended a hand, the Citizens could have provided significant grassroots potential. Instead, the party's major interest was the national level, where the Citizens, through the giant Young and Rubicam ad agency, controlled half of the television activities.⁵⁴

The election was a bitter lesson for TV visionary Leonard Hall, who resigned as party chairman only weeks later. There were apparently signals from the White House that Hall's services were no longer deemed necessary, a likely possibility as Hall was the logical person for whom to blame the 1956 defeats.⁵⁵ Hall was replaced by Meade Alcorn, a Connecticut lawyer with little TV background, who would learn that numerous local committees, and even some state organizations in the South, had been close to cut off from national headquarters in 1956.⁵⁶ Hall eventually conceded that TV had been incorrectly conceived as a political cure-all. "We still have much to learn about how best to use [television] in a national campaign," wrote Hall in a 1960 Life article. "Important as television and new transportation methods are, they don't replace the local organization. There is no substitute for this vital element, and there is no substitute for door-bell ringing and shoe leather."⁵⁷

Uncertainties may have lingered, but 1956 marked a turning point in political television. Not only did 1956 demonstrate for the first time that a sustained and national campaign could be waged over television, it

also produced the revelation that TV, ideal for projecting the strengths of candidates, was ineffectual in selling a political party. This helped explain why the influence of national parties began to wither in a television age that saw politicians run their own campaigns.

Many experts gradually saw this coming in the 1950s because of anomalies in 1956 voter research. The Survey Research Center reported the public in 1956 had perceived Eisenhower as a better leader and more likable than in 1952, key dimensions of the TV strategy. More revealing was that the Republican party, for all its self promotion, was perceived more negatively, something witnessed not just in empirical studies but also in actual votes.⁵⁸ Eisenhower outpolled GOP candidates in ninety percent of the House districts.⁵⁹ This challenged much of the day's conventional wisdom, including E.E. Schattschneider's influential 1942 Party Government, which offered that a president with fifty-eight percent of the popular vote, as with Eisenhower, would enjoy a sixty-five percent margin in the House.⁶⁰ The Republicans pulled only forty-six percent of the House seats. This classic "coattail" theory gave way to a new concept of candidate-party divergence that keyed new political realities. As Michigan State's Charles Press wrote in 1958, the "important element that remains is the candidate's ability to campaign hard and win district votes by his own efforts," not on the strength of the national ticket or national organization.⁶¹

Ironically, given their commitment to television, the Republicans may have won more seats had they deemphasized linkages between Eisenhower, the national party and the Congressional candidates. Things were different than in 1952, when the Republicans won Congress during widespread dissatisfaction with the Truman administration. By 1956, as the GOP showed

time and again on television, the nation was content and back to normal. Tens of millions of comfortable Democrats "liked Ike," but came back to their party in the Congressional contests.⁶²

It was also ironic that television, the domain of the national GOP in the 1950s, would stymie the party in many later Congressional elections. In the 1960s and 1970s, television was vastly more integral to House and Senate campaigns than in 1956. It was also enormously expensive, especially in House campaigns, where budgets were often very small. Incumbents, most of whom were Democrats, had immediate advantages in accessing television, while superior Democratic grassroots organizing often converted into better campaign cash flows. By the 1980s, however, the Republicans were raising and spending more money locally than Democrats; some attribute GOP gains in Congress that decade to heavy spending in races that had Democratic incumbents.⁶³

The RNC continued to use national television to help House and Senate candidates in situations reminiscent of 1956, in which party-based TV messages dovetailed with powerful national candidates. As in 1956, results were not definitive. During Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign, the RNC hired the ad agency of Humphrey Browning MacDougall for a series of spots, one featuring a lookalike of House Speaker Tip O'Neill, that attacked irresponsible spending of Congressional Democrats. This "Vote Republican" campaign was reprised during Reagan's reelection in 1984. Although these spots may have helped the GOP win the Senate in those years, the party made no headway in the House. In 1986, the Democrats once again controlled both sides of Congress, as they did in 1988, despite a sizable victory by George Bush and another supplemental television effort by the national committee. These later efforts to sell a Repub-

lican party identity marked no return to the TV "coattail" concept. By then, it was clear that any party TV campaign had to be peripheral to the vastly more important individual efforts in each state, district and locale.

The 1956 campaign had been pivotal in establishing this direction, even though the television-attuned Republicans became trend-setters in defeat. Nineteen-fifty-six was both the first occasion in which a political party tried to sell itself through a well-orchestrated television campaign, and it was also the last. Although voters bought the standard-bearer and rejected the rest of the line, 1956 had been an important learning experience. Out of it came insights about the political shortcomings of a bold new medium and a grand old party.

NOTES

¹ Two standard works from the popular literature on the importance of television in political campaigns are Theodore H. White's The Making of the President 1960 (New York: Atheneum, 1961) and Joe McGinniss' The Selling of the President (New York: Trident Books, 1969). Among the diverse scholarly studies are Kurt Lang and Gladys Lang, Politics and Television (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968); Daniel Nimmo and Robert Savage, Candidates and Their Images (Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear Publishing, 1976) and Kathleen Jamieson, Packaging the Presidency (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

² See Martin P. Wattenberg, The Decline of American Political Parties (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984) and Jeff Fishel, ed., Parties and Elections in an Anti-Party Age (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1978).

³ A.C. Nielsen figures from Leo Bogart, The Age of Television (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972).

⁴ Federal Communications Commission figures from Radio Annual and Television Yearbook 1957 (New York: Radio Daily Corporation, 1957).

⁵ By 1989 the Time-Life organization was the nation's largest television corporation with revenues surpassing those of ABC, NBC and CBS. See Channels, Dec., 1989, p. 66.

⁶ SRC figures appear in Erik W. Austin, Political Facts of the United States Since 1789 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 387-388.

⁷ See Hagerty Diary, Mar. 2; Mar. 4 and Mar. 25, 1954, James C. Hagerty Papers, Eisenhower Library.

⁸ Dwight Eisenhower, Mandate for Change 1953-1956 (New York: Doubleday, 1963), p. 517.

⁹ Eisenhower considered formation of a "Board of Strategy" to deal with his perceived public relations problem. This is detailed in a letter he sent to his staff Nov. 23, 1953. See DDE Diaries, Box 3, Eisenhower Library.

¹⁰ Mandate, p. 516.

¹¹ See Hagerty Diary, Dec. 20, 1954, James C. Hagerty Papers; and C.D. Jackson to Henry Luce, Dec. 21, 1954, C.D. Jackson Papers, Eisenhower Library.

¹² Summerfield resigned to become Postmaster General; Eisenhower ousted Roberts amid scandal in Roberts' home state of Kansas.

¹³ L. Richard Guylay, Eisenhower Oral History Project, Columbia University, p. 64; and Cabell Phillips, "Party Chairmen: Study in Feuds and Funds," New York Times Magazine, pp. 10-11, 28.

¹⁴ James Reston, "The Busy Republicans," New York Times, Sept. 15, 1955.

¹⁵ Richard Guylay to Leonard Hall, Aug. 9, 1955, Box 103, Records of the Republican National Committee; and National Citizens for Eisenhower-Nixon Summary Report, Box 6, Young and Rubicam Records, Eisenhower Library.

¹⁶ See "What Ike Will Do in the Campaign," U.S. News and World Report, Mar. 2, 1956, pp. 19-21.

¹⁷ RNC guide for 1955 Campaign School, Box 2, Robert Humphreys Papers, Eisenhower Library.

¹⁸ Leonard Hall, "Hall Hails the Revolution Wrought by TV and Airplanes," Life, April 21, 1960, pp. 126-134.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Meeting transcript, Eisenhower and Richard Nixon, Feb. 7, 1956, DDE Diaries. Also see diary entries Feb. 8; Feb. 9; Feb. 22; Feb. 27 and Feb. 29, 1956, DDE Diaries, Eisenhower Library.

²¹ Speech files, Box 34, James C. Hagerty Papers, Eisenhower Library.

²² SRC results from Donald Stokes, Angus Campbell and Warren Miller, "Components of Electoral Decision," American Political Science Review (June 1958): 367-387.

²³ RNC Campaign Plan, Box 11, Robert Humphreys Papers, Eisenhower Library.

²⁴ James Reston, "The Busy Republicans," New York Times, Sept. 15, 1955, p. 19.

²⁵ Guylay oral history, p. 9.

²⁶ RNC Campaign Plan.

²⁷ "Peace, prosperity and progress" began as a Young and Rubicam concept. Early in the year, the agency used an Eisenhower speech on presidential leadership to sift out the three-word slogan, based on visual possibilities. See David Levy to Thomas Lapham, May 11, 1956, Box 5, Young and Rubicam Records, Eisenhower Library.

²⁸ David Levy interview with author, Jan. 26, 1988.

²⁹ Carroll Newton interview with author, Sept. 3, 1988.

³⁰ "Film Has Duet With Eisenhowers," New York Times, June 24, 1956, p. 42.

³¹ A comprehensive summary of 1956 campaign spending appears in Congressional Record, 85th Cong., 1st sess., 1957. Vol. 103, pt. 4:4773-4795 and 5588-5606.

³² Guide for 1955 Campaign School.

³³ Transcripts of these appearances are found in Speech Files, Box 78, James C. Hagerty Papers, Eisenhower Library. Films of the Pittsburgh and Washington state appearances are housed in the library's audio-visual holdings.

³⁴ BBDO Campaign Plan, Sept. 21, 1956, Box 711, Central Files, Eisenhower Library.

³⁵ Film, Young and Rubicam "College" spot, Oct., 1956, audio-visual holdings, Eisenhower Library.

³⁶ Film, Young and Rubicam "Mamie" spot, Oct., 1956, audio-visual holdings, Eisenhower Library.

³⁷ Levy interview.

³⁸ A.C. Nielsen figures from John Runyon, Jennefer Verdini and Sally Runyon, Source Book of American Presidential Campaigns and Elections 1948-1968 (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1971).

³⁹ Kinescope, "The People Ask the President," NBC, Oct. 12, 1956, audio-visual holdings, Eisenhower Library.

⁴⁰ Kinescope, "Ike Day," CBS, Oct. 13, 1956, audio-visual holdings, Eisenhower Library.

⁴¹ Kinescope, Eisenhower coffee klatsch, CBS, Oct. 24, 1956, audio-visual holdings, Eisenhower Library.

⁴² J.R. Wiggins, "1956 Election Could Repeat Unique Split of 1848," Washington Post, pp. E-1, E-5 and Burns W. Roper, "The Public Pulse: GOP Seen Leading in Presidency Alone," appearing in Box 714, Official File, Eisenhower Library.

⁴³ RNC campaign progress report, Oct. 15, 1956, Box 104, Records of the Republican National Chairman, Eisenhower Library.

⁴⁴ Trip Files, Box 29, Thomas Stephens Papers, Eisenhower Library.

⁴⁵ Film, Young and Rubicam "Korea" spot, Oct., 1956, audio-visual holdings, Eisenhower Library.

⁴⁶ Film, Young and Rubicam "Taxi Driver" spot, Oct., 1956, audio-visual holdings, Eisenhower Library.

⁴⁷ Gallup polls Oct. 10, Oct. 26 and Nov. 4, 1956.

⁴⁸ Campaign report, Paul Hoffman, Oct. 29, 1956, Box 714, Central Files, Eisenhower Library.

⁴⁹ Kinescope, "Four More Years," Nov. 5, 1956, audio-visual holdings, Eisenhower Library.

⁵⁰ Nielsen figures.

⁵¹ Richard Nixon, RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978), pp. 180-181.

⁵² Eisenhower felt his pleas in 1956 for Modern Republicanism were mistakenly interpreted as a "schism" in the party. He also labeled as "exaggeration" the widespread belief that these supposed divisions led to the 1958 defeats. Eisenhower blamed the poor Republican showing in 1958 on a recession and a resounding defeat in several states of right-to-work legislation which numerous Republicans supported. See Eisenhower, Waging Peace 1956-1961 (New York: Doubleday, 1965), pp. 374-376.

⁵³ Eisenhower to William Paley, Nov. 14, 1956, DDE Diaries, Eisenhower Library.

⁵⁴ Guylay oral history, p. 78.

⁵⁵ Eisenhower's assessment of Hall's tenure, upon Hall's resignation, was short and subdued; see Eisenhower's public statement, Jan. 11, 1957, Box 710, Central Files, Eisenhower Library.

⁵⁶ Meade Alcorn, Eisenhower Oral History Project, Columbia University, pp. 89-92.

⁵⁷ Hall.

⁵⁸ Stokes, et al.

⁵⁹ Charles Press, "Voting Statistics and Presidential Coattails," American Political Science Review (Dec., 1958): 1041-1050.

⁶⁰ E.E. Schattschneider, Party Government (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1942), pp. 75-76.

⁶¹ Press.

⁶² Some Democratic candidates refrained from attacking Eisenhower, including Idaho's Frank Church and Ohio Frank Lausche, who unseated Republican senators in 1956. See Charles Thomson and Frances Shattuck, The 1956 Presidential Campaign (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1960), p. 358.

⁶³ Gary Jacobson, "Party Organization and Distribution of Campaign Resources: Republicans and Democrats in 1982," Political Science Quarterly (Winter 1985-86): 603-625.

THE BLACK PRESS

**THE BLACK PRESS AND THE CAMPAIGN
FOR A FEDERAL ANTILYNCHING LAW, 1933-34**

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THE BLACK PRESS

THE BLACK PRESS AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR A FEDERAL ANTILYNCHING LAW, 1933-34

Abstract

During 1933, mob lynchings in the South increased to epidemic proportions. That fall, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), revived its dormant campaign to lobby Congress for a federal antilynching law.

This study examines the generally overlooked role of the black press, North and South. It focuses on the active role of five black newspapers—three in the North and two in the South. It will be shown that these newspapers, in publicizing both the lynchings and the campaign for an antilynching law, aimed to shape black public opinion and to influence the black civil rights agenda of the early 1930s.

Although the campaign for an antilynching law failed, the campaign in the press helped build the numerical and financial strength of the NAACP. Ultimately, as the campaign developed and in its aftermath, the numbers of lynchings declined significantly.

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THE BLACK PRESS AND THE CAMPAIGN
FOR A FEDERAL ANTILYNCHING LAW, 1933-34

During 1933, mob lynchings in the South increased to epidemic proportions. Statistics differ, but across the region, from Mississippi to Maryland, the frequency of mob murders at least quadrupled over the previous year. Compared to about six lynchings of blacks in 1932, some 24 were carried out in 1933. In October 1933, the nationally circulated black newspaper in Baltimore, the weekly Afro-American, calculated that "since August 27 we have averaged one lynching a week."¹

This outburst of brutality shocked both blacks and whites, North and South. The frequency of lynchings in 1933 negated the argument of Southern whites who contended that the practice would be abolished by social pressure, without federal intervention. After particularly barbaric lynchings in Alabama and

¹Editorial, "Lynchings Go Up," Baltimore Afro-American, Oct. 21, 1933, p. 16. The editors relied on a count of 32 blacks, according to records of the International Labor Defense, the New York-based organization coordinating the defense of the nine Scottsboro boys. However, the Archives at Tuskegee Institute, which had begun recording lynchings in the 1890s, counted only 24 blacks lynched in 1933. For 1932 totals, the Afro-America relied the figure of six, recorded by the Federal Council of Churches. The Tuskegee Institute also recorded six for 1932.

That 1932 total, however, conflicted with reports of lynchings carried in the black press. In October 1932, the Chicago Defender reported that a mob near Senatobia, Miss., killed all seven blacks in a farm family. "Family of Seven Meet Death at Hands of White Lynchers," Chicago Defender, Oct. 29, 1932, p. 1. A month earlier, two tree lynchings of blacks in Crossett, Ark., and Warrenton, Va. (this one viewed by a mob of 1,000), were condemned by a black-owned Louisiana newspaper which said "savagery and barbarism brought forth reminiscence of the feeding of the Christians to the starving lions during the Roman era." "'Nature in the Raw,'" Louisiana Weekly, reprinted in the Atlanta World, Sept. 23, 1932, p. 6.

The disparity in numbers, according to the Afro-American, was based on the fact that "there is no settled rule for defining a lynching, or even a mob." Editorial, "Inaccurate Reports on Lynchings," Baltimore Afro-American, Jan. 7, 1933, p. 6.

Maryland, black editors of the Pittsburgh Courier reasoned that, "we have the plainest proof that action by the federal government is needed if lynching is to be stamped out."²

In the fall of 1933, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), revived its dormant campaign to lobby Congress for a federal antilynching law. The timing seemed fortuitous, in light of the ascendancy of a new president, Franklin Roosevelt, whose public pronouncements seemed in sympathy with issues of importance to blacks.

This study examines the generally overlooked role of the black press, North and South. It focuses on the active role of five black newspapers--three in the North and two in the South. It will be shown that these newspapers, in publicizing both the lynchings and the campaign for an antilynching law, aimed to shape black public opinion and to influence the black civil rights agenda of the early 1930s. As the campaign developed, the black press played a major role. Black editors rallied black public opinion for political action. They prodded the consciences of whites, North and South, who publicly denounced lynching as mob murder. Although the campaign for an antilynching law failed, the campaign in the press helped build the numerical and financial strength of the NAACP. Ultimately, as the campaign developed and in its aftermath, the numbers of lynchings declined significantly.

* * *

From late 1933 until early 1934, editors of black newspapers, North and

²Editorial, Pittsburgh Courier, Nov. 4, 1933, p. 2

South, exerted pressure to restore a federal antilynching law to the national political agenda. Among the Northern black weeklies three nationally circulated newspapers took a leading role in the campaign, helping to shape black opinion in the North and South. These were the Chicago Defender, the most influential of the three, published by Robert S. Abbott, the Pittsburgh Courier, edited by lawyer Robert S. Vann, and Carl Murphy's Baltimore Afro-American, the oldest of the three. Among black-owned newspapers in the South, two were particularly important—the Norfolk Journal and Guide, published by P. B. Young Sr., and the Atlanta Daily World, published by W. A. Scott II and edited by Frank Marshall Davis. The World, the newest of all five, was the only black daily newspaper.

These major black-owned newspapers devoted hundreds of columns of news space to reports of lynchings. In most cases, the editors depended upon press association dispatches from the South, but on occasion they sent their own reporters to the scene, or published the accounts of eye-witnesses and even of rare survivors.³

³Representative of black newspapers' news coverage of lynchings during the summer and fall of 1933, and early 1934 were the following front page headlines:

Alabama Mob Kills Six;
Sheriff Aids Lynch Party;
Bodies Found Riddled by Bullets;
Three Still Missing
Law Officers Give
Over Prisoners

—Chicago Defender, Aug. 19, 1933, p. 1.

Mad Mobsters Pick Out Victim's Gold Teeth

B U R N

His Naked Body in Gasoline

—Baltimore Afro-American, Oct. 28, 1933, p. 1.

I Was Lynched, But Lived to Talk;

19-year-old Boy relates tragedy in Small La. Town

—Pittsburgh Courier, Dec. 30, 1933, p. 1.

In the aftermath of lynchings, the black press also reported on the response of the public, particularly the action or inaction of local white authorities and grand juries. In most cases, authorities failed to arrest members of lynch mobs; those few arrested were seldom indicted or convicted. Articulating a central theme of the antilynching campaign, the Chicago Defender declared that "the silence upon the part of those who do not take part in lynchings yet refuse to rebuke and expose the lynchers, makes them partners to the offense."⁴

The judicial system itself was a target of attacks. Editors denounced the appearance of collaboration between Southern courts and lynchers. In the summer of 1933, a mob in Tuscaloosa, Ala., lynched three men accused a killing a white woman, whose body was found in a ravine. As the Defender reported it, the judge played into the plans of a courtroom "packed with lynchers." First, the judge refused the accused men lawyers of their choice, then he ordered the three men turned over to the sheriff, from whom the men were taken by the lynch mob. "We do not charge that the court and the sheriff were in a conspiracy with the lynchers," the editors wrote, "but we charge that the conduct of the court and the sheriff does not appear to have been in opposition to the action of the

Real Cause of Lynching is Revealed
Tennessee Damsel (Paid) to Say
Mob Victim Raped Her
Investigators Busy;
Refusal to "Mister"
White Boy Real
Complaint

—Norfolk Journal and Guide, Jan. 6, 1934, p. 1.

⁴Editorial, "White woman dead, Black man sought," Chicago Defender Nov. 18, 1933, p. 14.

lynchers."⁵

Black reporters covering the South for Northern newspapers faced a special danger. In the spring of 1933, the black weekly Amsterdam News noted that black reporters in Decatur, Alabama, to cover the trial of the nine black "Scottsboro Boys" had "been assured of protection from the mob." As a cost-cutting measure, the News, the Baltimore Afro-American, the Norfolk Journal and Guide and other black newspapers had joined to form Co-operative Publishers. Member newspapers received reports from Alabama by William N. Jones, managing editor of the Afro-American, and by P. Bernard Young Jr., managing editor of the Journal and Guide.⁶

Blacks paid a terrible price for the failure of law enforcement to guarantee punishment. In Atlanta, Frank Marshall Davis, managing editor of the Atlanta World, insisted that murders and lynchings would not stop until both whites and blacks were sure the authorities would punish them for breaking the law. David added not only lynching victims but also victims of murder in the black community. In an editorial, "Murders in the South," he calculated that "more than ten times as many Negroes were killed by Negroes in just three cities [Memphis, Atlanta and Birmingham] in 1931 as were lynched by whites all over America." Davis recommended two remedies to decrease the intra-racial death toll. First, he reasoned that with better education, black men and women would

⁵Editorial, "Southern Court Arranges Lynching," Chicago Defender, Aug. 26, 1933, p. 14. The editors labeled Tuscaloosa "the breeding place for judicial crimes" and its courts "the instrumentality of injustice, cruelty and barbarism." The three victims had been given a "make-believe judicial proceeding" in deference to public opinion.

⁶"Amsterdam News Correspondents Were Protected," Amsterdam News, April 12, 1933, p. 2.

enjoy "a culture which is not so easily punctured by those acts which inspire people less fortunate to kill without delay." The second remedy would be "certainty of punishment"—to counter the tragic reality that

Members of our race kill each other because they know few police departments will make more than a superficial effort to find them and get a conviction, [and] if convicted the sentence is as a rule light, while popular white sentiment considers purely Negro murders nothing affecting them and the victim as one less black with which their race will have to deal.⁷

The rare occasions when authorities seemed intent on bringing lynchers to justice were featured prominently in the black press. In January 1934, a Nashville judge empowered a grand jury to investigate and "promptly indict" members of the mob which hanged a 19-year-old black man after a previous grand jury declined to indict him.⁸

The general failure to prosecute lynchers—together with the increase in lynchings in the South—spurred the introduction of a new federal antilynching bill. Senate Bill No. 1978, the Costigan-Wagner Bill, was introduced in Congress in January 1934 by Sen. Edward F. Costigan, Democrat of Colorado, and Sen. Robert F. Wagner, Democrat of New York.⁹ It was the first effort since the defeat in 1919-1921 of a bill to make lynching a federal matter.¹⁰ Because of the opposition of Southern Democrats, who had killed the bill a decade earlier, an effort was made to persuade a Southern congressman to sponsor the new

⁷"Murder in the South," Atlanta World, Jan. 15, 1932, p. 6.

⁸'Find the Lynchers,' Tennessee Judge Orders; Lynching of Cheek Branded 'Outrage,' Pittsburgh Courier, Jan. 13, 1934, p. 2.

⁹Congressional Record, 73 Cong., 2 Sess. (Feb. 2, 1934), 1820-1821, cited in Robert L. Zangrando, "The NAACP and a Federal Antilynching Bill," Journal of Negro History, Vol. 50 (April 1965): 107.

¹⁰In 1919, an antilynching campaign led by the NAACP led to introduction in Congress of the Dyer Bill, sponsored by Rep. L. C. Dyer of St. Louis. The bill, which would have made lynching a federal offense, passed the House but was defeated by filibuster in the Senate, and died in 1921.

bill.¹¹ In announcing he would introduce the bill, Sen. Costigan issued a statement, declaring that, "If mob violence is to run riot in America in place of orderly justice the end of free government on this continent will have come. The sober sense of this country does not, and will not, sanction such blind and menacing lawlessness."¹² Significantly, his views were made public in a telegram to the New York headquarters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

While the bill was sponsored by the two senators, its language had been drafted for the most part by the legal committee of the NAACP.¹³ The driving force behind the NAACP was its executive secretary, Walter White, who had been involved with the failed campaign to secure the Dyer antilynching bill in 1919-1921. An antilynching bill had long been one of White's priorities, and to that end he had researched and written a book on lynching, Rope and Faggot. In his book, White had accused "derelict officials" across the South as ultimately responsible for mob lawlessness, noting that

no lyncher has ever needed to feel the slightest apprehension regarding punishment or even the annoyance of an investigation. Even in the few instances where there were arrests and trials, the accused usually had friends on the jury, if not fellow lynchers; in others he knew that jurors and court officials were in sympathy with him or else dared not press the case too vigorously.¹⁴

In 1933, when the NAACP unveiled the draft of the Costigan-Wagner bill, White

¹¹Robert L. Zangrando, The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909-1950 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), p. 111.

¹²"Sen. Costigan Fathers Bill Against Lynching; Draft Federal Law to check Crime," Chicago Defender, Dec. 9, 1933, p. 1.

¹³"NAACP Drafting New Anti-Lynching Bill; Committee Says It Is Only Way To Stop The Mob; Bill Will be Introduced in January, 1934—Will Have Plenty 'Teeth,'" Pittsburgh Courier, Nov. 4, 1933, p. 2.

¹⁴Walter White, Rope & Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), pp. 8-9.

declared in similar language that

It is plain to everyone that the states are unwilling or unable to stop lynching. The officers of the law either aid the lynchers actively or else stand idly by and let the mob do its work. Governors order investigations which never discover anything. Grand juries find no evidence for indictments.¹⁵

White and the NAACP campaign continued to make news in the black press throughout the fall of 1933 and winter of 1934. White's main business was in the New York headquarters and in Washington, but he spent time rallying black support in major urban areas, giving talks and issuing statements. The black press accorded him the coverage due a major political figure. Two months before the Costigan-Wagner bill was first publicized, White visited Pittsburgh as part of what the Courier termed his "militant speaking crusade against the horrible wave of lynching which has swept America during the past ten months."¹⁶ Each new lynching focused more attention on White and the NAACP activism. When 17-year-old Cordie Cheek was kidnapped and lynched in Maury County, Tenn., White state he had obtained investigators who determined that the young man was killed by the mob "because he had refused to call a white lad of his own age 'Mister' and had had a fight as a result."¹⁷

The antilynching campaign would cost money, and the black press pitched by helping publicize the NAACP's urgent need for paid memberships. The Courier gave unqualified support to the NAACP as "the only logical organization to

¹⁵"NAACP Drafting," Pittsburgh Courier.

¹⁶White spoke at the Macedonia Baptist Church on Nov. 2, 1933. The Courier noted that "a vigorous effort will be made to bring about some drastic legislation to curb this barbarous and inhuman practice." "Walter White to Score Lynching At Meeting Here," Pittsburgh Courier, Oct. 28, 1933, p. 1.

¹⁷"Refusal to 'Mister' White Boy Real Complaint," Norfolk Journal and Guide, Jan. 6, 1934, p. 1.

organize and further the campaign for such a law. It almost succeeded in getting such a law passed several years ago." The NAACP could bring "tremendous, intelligently directed pressure." Success would follow, the editors said, "IF NEGROES WILL GIVE IT THE SUPPORT THEY SHOULD" and provide "ample funds to pay talented lobbyists in Washington." To increase numbers and funds during the Depression, the NAACP asked for basic \$1 memberships, "or slightly less than two cents a week."¹⁸

During these months, blacks tried to put antilynching legislation on the agenda of the new president, Franklin Roosevelt. The NAACP sought a conference with the president but was unsuccessful, partly because Roosevelt was preoccupied with remedies for the Depression's economic ills, partly because the subject of federal intervention for lynching could easily strain relations with powerful Southern Democrats whose support he needed.¹⁹

The black press did not relent on the need for federal intervention against lynching. In August, the Defender noted the president's interest in a study of ways to eradicate kidnapping. The editors contended that any solution for kidnapping "will be incomplete unless the same law is made directly applicable to the lyncher as well."²⁰ In November 1933, the Defender addressed an editorial to the president, calling his attention to the "numerous lynchings

¹⁸Editorial, "An Anti-Lynching Law," Pittsburgh Courier, Oct. 28, 1933, p. 10. A generation before the locus of the civil rights movement moved into the churches, the editors suggested that, "If there were as many N.A.A.C.P. members as Negro church members in the United States, this evil could be forever banished from the nation."

¹⁹Zangrando, NAACP, p. 112.

²⁰Editorial, "The Kidnaper and the Lyncher," Chicago Defender, Aug. 12, 1933, p. 14.

which in the past six months have assumed increasing proportions." The editors declared that, "The continuation of these crimes impugns the motives and purposes which are presumed to sustain our statutes and laws and renders the character of our civilization reprehensible to other nations of the world." They wished to know where the president stood on the issue:

It is sincerely hoped, Mr. President, that you will find it convenient to let it be known to the nation that you regard the flag under which you govern as being equally responsible alike for all racial units. That you regard these cruel and inhuman offenses against a weak and defenseless portion of American citizenry as contravening not only the law of our country but of God as well.²¹

The black press in the South—at least in the urban areas—endorsed the antilynching bill. At the Atlanta World, Frank Marshall Davis endorsed the NAACP's campaign to pass the federal antilynching law.²² Sensing that there was real hope the law would be passed during 1934, Davis wrote that "it is gratifying...a move has been made to rid the country from the terrible blot of lynching, which is a hangover torture long outgrown by progressive civilizations." A direct way to stop "local sanction" of lynching would be to fire the sheriff who fails to protect his prisoners and to pay relatives of the "lynchee" \$10,000.²³

Nothing advanced this movement for moderation so fast as one outburst of extremism. Overnight, the black press campaign for justice suddenly gained the

²¹Editorial, "Special to the President of the United States," Chicago Defender, Nov. 18, 1933, p. 14.

²²Davis had a personal experience with lynching in Kansas when he was 5 years old. Some white third-graders who had heard about lynching practiced on him and nearly hanged him.

²³"What the Country Knows about Lynching," Atlanta World, Jan. 8, 1934, p. 6.

sustained attention of the white press and white political leaders. The catalyst for the antilynching movement turned out to be the extremism not of a Southerner but of a California governor. In late November, a mob at San Jose lynched two white men accused of kidnapping and murder. Gov. James Rolph Jr. created the firestorm of controversy when he issued a statement which suggested that the lynch mob had merely speeded up the judicial process. His various public comments appeared to condone lynching and promise immunity to the lynch mob. He was accused of deferring his Thanksgiving vacation to prevent anyone from calling out the militia and thus preventing lynchings.²⁴

Rolph's actions and comments seemed to demand a national rebuttal. No high public official outside the South had encouraged lynching for more than a generation. The rebuttal came quickly from national political leaders, including former President Herbert Hoover. After at first declining to reply to Hoover, Rolph consulted with his aides, and issued a statement. He denied that he advocated lynch law but he refused to recant and gave new sympathy for lynchers, stating, "I repeat what I said in my original statement, that while the law should have been permitted to take its course, the people by their action have given notice to the entire world that in California kidnapping will not be tolerated."²⁵

The political firestorm engaged the white establishment press and its readers. During early December, with Christmas approaching, the American press published news stories and editorials, and the public was galvanized temporarily by the injustice of lynching. In Washington, the Socialist party

²⁴Editorial, "Violating His Own Law," Pittsburgh Courier, Dec. 23, 1933, p. 10.

²⁵"Hoover and Rolph In Sharp Exchange," New York Times, Dec. 1, 1933, p. 4.

leader, Norman Thomas, urged Roosevelt "to make a public appeal against lawlessness and mob lynching in an effort to stem the lynching wave."²⁶ The NAACP also called on Roosevelt to take a public stand against lynching.²⁷

In St. Paul, an editorial in the Pioneer Press branded Rolph's statements as "among the most shocking ever made by a Governor of an American State" and seemed to support sentiment for an antilynching law: "Crime will not be stamped out in American until all who would commit deliberate crime know that the force of police and of the courts will certainly overcome them if they break the law."²⁸ In New York, a physician wrote a letter in which he diagnosed lynching as a "symptom of an underlying disorder" and declared that the "cure" depended upon "efficient detection and arrest of criminals, followed by a quick, certain court procedure to dispose of the offender."²⁹

Church leaders, Protestant and Catholic, were moved by the moral implications of Rolph's extraordinary condoning of the lynch mob. A spokesman for the national Presbyterian Church said the California governor's attitude humiliated the United States and undermined its moral authority to throw "anathemas and stones at Germany for the pressure she has put upon the Jews."³⁰ In St. Louis, Catholic prelates adopted a resolution deploring recent lynchings

²⁶"Socialists Urge Anti-Lynching Law; Thomas and Waldman Sign a Telegram, Appealing to the President for Action; Gov. Rolph is Denounced; Roosevelt is Asked to Use His Power to Stop 'Epidemic of Sadistic Terror,'" New York Times, Dec. 1, 1933, p.4.

²⁷Zangrando, NAACP, p. 104.

²⁸Editorial, "Skeleton in the Closet," St. Paul Pioneer Press, reprinted in New York Times, Dec. 3, 1933, p. 4.

²⁹Physician, "Lynching Diagnosed," New York Times, Dec. 9, 1933, p. 14.

³⁰"Sees Nation Humiliated; Dr. Macartney in Pittsburg Deplores 'American Atrocities,'" New York Times, Dec. 1, 1933, p. 4.

and urging governors to take immediate steps "that such occurrences be rendered impossible for the future."³¹

The general condemnation of Rolph encouraged the black community. The Associated Negro Press (ANP) dispatched an interpretive story concluding, "Some solace may be felt by Negro citizens of the United States who view with heavy hearts the past week's widely scattered outbreaks of lynch lawlessness in a realization of the fact that no person of power or influence or position has condoned the occurrences." The ANP noted that

The stand taken by Gov. James Rolph, Jr., of California, signal as it was, received both praise and censure, but it is noticeable that the praise came from unknown persons of little influence and the censure from responsible leaders of American thought.³²

The expression of outrage penetrated walls of indifference. Even in the defensive South, enlightened white citizens of the upper and middle classes went on record as opposing lynching. At the very least, lynching was bad for business, not only bringing bad publicity to the South but also accelerating the migration of cheap black labor to the North, to the Detroit automaking industry, to Chicago and to Harlem.

Harlem during the 1920s had become a beacon to Southern blacks. Blacks were lured to New York by letters from relatives who had gone ahead, or by their own

³¹"Catholic Prelates Deplore Lynchings; Group at Bishop Lillis' Consecration in St. Louis Urges Governors to Act," New York Times, Dec. 1, 1933, p. 4.

³²Associated Negro Press, "Nation's Leaders Condemn Lynching Stand of California's Governor; Persons of Power and Influence Scathingly Denounce Lawlessness and Un-American Stand of Governor Rolph; Bishops, Governors, Authors, Government Officials Unite in Expressing Disapproval of California's Travesty on Legal Justice," Pittsburgh Courier, Dec. 9, 1933, p. 2.

dreams of freedom.³³ It was not lost on them that Statue of Liberty might mean as much to them as it had for waves of European immigrants. The Depression deepened despair in the South and became a new impetus for migration. It was not lost on white Southerners that blacks were leaving in great numbers, as evidenced by the lines at railroad depots in Atlanta, crossroads of the Southern rail lines. Whenever possible, Southerners tried to take some of the glitter off the image of Harlem. When in late 1933, the New York Herald Tribune published a story about the negative aspects of black life in Harlem, the Atlanta Constitution quickly noted that

the particular paradise to which thousands of southern Negroes have been attracted during the past decade," is pictured... as 'all front and no depth, where clothes are fine, but stomachs are empty'—a condition as every southerner knows, exactly the reverse of the status of the Negro in the South. Southern Negroes may not be well clothed and their homes may be humble, but, taken as a group, they are as well fed as any of the great middle classes of American citizens—a state of affairs that is contributed to very largely by their easy access to the larders of the white people whom so many of the race serve as house servants.

In that editorial, the Constitution contended, with a measure of wishful thinking, that "the race, having learned the mistake they have made, they are coming 'home' each year by the thousands, and the proof of their wisdom is demonstrated by the warm welcome they are receiving from the "white folks" they deserted for the chimera of wealth in less sympathetic and understanding communities."³⁴ In Chicago, the Defender said the Southern editors were guilty of writing "silly rot" in their "forlorn, hopeless task of trying to convince members of the Race that they are better off in the South than they are in the North." The Defender conceded that jobs were scarce in the North, but added

³³See Leonard Ray Teel, Erma: A Black Woman Remembers, 1912-1980 (New York: Random House Inc., 1981), pp. 109-120.

³⁴"Other Papers Say— Harlem's False Front (Atlanta Constitution)," reprinted in Chicago Defender, Nov. 11, 1933, p. 14.

that jobs for blacks had also disappeared in the South because whites had

forgot their dignity and hurled themselves into active competition with all other people for what few crumbs there were left....They have become domestic workers, laundry workers, scavengers, garbage collectors, street cleaners, or anything that would give them the bread crusts they had hitherto scorned as fit only for black men and women. Indeed, so great has become the struggle to live that even Jim Crow breadlines were set up with the white breadline covering more than its share of space.³⁵

The Depression and the migration of labor to the North gave Southern civic and business leaders reason to be concerned. Enlightened whites seeking to attract Northern capital sought to limit the damaging effects of the lynchings by banding together in a publicly visible manner.³⁶ In this effort, the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC) had been engaged progressively since 1919 from its headquarters in Atlanta. While whites generally did not attack the Jim Crow laws or segregated society in general, they nevertheless could come together publicly to address excesses of segregation. The CIC, for example, sponsored the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching.³⁷ In 1929, as head of the NAACP, Walter White viewed this economic self-interest with optimism, noting that as whites

realized through the migration the economic asset that the Negro is to the South, and the disastrous economic effect of mob-law and the resulting disturbance of white and Negro labour, this new and powerful force of enlightened self-interest is working and will work for suppression of mobbism—that is, where mobbism works against pecuniary interest."³⁸

The economic impact of lynching was communicated to European newspaper readers. Harold Butcher, the American correspondent for the liberal Liverpool

³⁵"The Week—Harlem vs. Atlanta," Chicago Defender, Dec. 16, 1933, p. 10.

³⁶Zangrando, NAACP, p. 11.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸White, Rope & Faggot, pp. 192-193.

Echo, sympathized with the plight of American blacks. "The swift terror of lynching faces the Negro who gets 'uppity,'" Butcher wrote:

His employers want to keep him as a cheap tool in the labor market, even NRA (National Recovery Act) is permitting differential wage scales against Negroes as compared with whites. But a cheap Negro is bad for a white worker whose chance of a job is jeopardized by the colored man, who will work for less. It is a vicious circle leading to perpetual terror, especially in districts where Negro citizens outnumber whites.³⁹

Despite this general image, progressive whites in the South generally condemned lynching, while cautiously hoping to forestall federal intervention in Southern law enforcement.

Southern white women of the middle and upper classes took a leadership role in the campaign against lynching. In the early 1930s, under the encouragement of the CIC, a group called the Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (SWPL) subscribed nearly 1 million members.⁴⁰ Among its most progressive members were those in the Georgia Council. In December 1933, the Georgia group gained national attention for preliminary statements, seemingly in support of the proposed Costigan-Wagner bill. The report in the Chicago Defender portrayed Southern white women at the brink of asking for federal assistance on lynching:

Facing a marked increase in mob violence in 1933, the Georgia Council of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, in annual session here last Friday, discussed the wisdom of asking for a federal anti-lynching law, but deferred action until the matter could be more fully studied

...In view of the unwillingness of local officials and courts to prosecute in such cases, the council voted its approval of proposed state legislation giving the governor authority to direct investigation and prosecution in lynching cases.⁴¹

³⁹"English Newspaper Scores American Lynching Orgy; Liverpool Echo Says Clue to Lynching Is Largely Economic," Pittsburgh Courier, Feb. 24, 1934, p. 2.

⁴⁰Zangrando, NAACP, p. 11, 105.

⁴¹"Georgia Women Demand Law To Wipe Out Lynching Evil; Urge Senate To Enact Ruling; Praise Gov. Ritchie and Condemn Gov. Rolph," Chicago Defender, Dec. 16, 1933, p. 1.

In deferring action, the Council asked that the matter be considered by the full Association, scheduled to meet Jan. 9 in Atlanta.

By January, the Association had backed away cautiously from seeking federal help. At the Atlanta meeting, women from 12 states held a highly visible and publicized conference in Atlanta. The conference gained some positive publicity for the region. Underlying the interest in this conference was the irony that lynch mobs historically had defended their actions on the grounds of protecting the integrity of Southern white women. Indeed, the black press alleged that black men were sometimes accused because "White men rape white women and place the crime on black men in the South; white men have been known to blacken their faces and commit crimes and then join in the lynching of a black man for the very crime they themselves committed."⁴² This was a widely shared view. In 1932, the Atlanta World excerpted from the book Brown America, in which Edwin Embree perceived a "perverted conscience in white man's violent anxiety to protect female purity"— "an unholy sensitiveness" deriving from "his own crimes against colored women."⁴³

Scholarly analysis of the records of hundreds of lynchings revealed that sex crimes were not the justifications for most lynchings. By the late 1920s, researchers had shown that alleged or actual sexual assaults were the reason for only 23 per cent of lynchings.⁴⁴ Then, in 1933, a three-year study

⁴²Editorial, "This Is a Metaphor," Chicago Defender, Nov. 18, 1933, p. 14.

⁴³"Changing Attitude," excerpt from Edwin Embree, Brown America (New York: Viking Press, 1931), p. 218, in Atlanta World, Aug. 23, 1932, p. 6.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 4. Walter White noted white lynchers used sexual assaults as their reason for action in order to avoid punishment and to "gain approval of their action." So pervasive was this practice that, "There was once a general conviction that most if not all lynchings were in expiation of sex crimes committed by Negroes upon white women." He cited the research of James Elbert Cutler, an economics instructor at Wellesley College, who in the early 1900s studied the cases of 2,060 blacks lynched between 1882-1903 and found that only 707 were charged with rape, or attempted or alleged rape. Charges of murder

concluded that blacks were lynched for a wide variety of alleged offenses, many of them frivolous or petty, as "trying to act like a white man" or mere suspicion of stealing hogs or cattle. The research, reviewing records on 40 years of lynchings, was done by the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching, at the suggestion of the Atlanta-based Commission on Interracial Cooperation. Published in 1933, The Tragedy of Lynching noted that of the 3,693 mob victims between 1889 and 1929, only 614 (16.7 per cent) had been accused of rape. The book reviewer for the Journal of Negro History noted that "among the apologists for lynching were found judges, prosecuting attorneys, lawyers, business men, teachers, mechanics, day laborers, and women of many types." He concluded that the book was "one of the most notable contributions to the literature about America's greatest shame."⁴⁵

The results of such studies on lynching and its causes were communicated abroad by the international press corps, with natural sympathy for the blacks' side of the story. One such report in the Liverpool Echo communicated the NAACP's lynching statistics and Walter White's statement on "the futility of depending on local officials to stamp out mob violence." On the subject of justification for lynchings, the article noted that the "often these assault charges are untrue. They merely service (sic), like war atrocity stories, as a convenient weapon to inflame the mob....In many ways other than attacking white

ranked first, rape was second, "minor offenses" third, arson fourth, theft fifth. White, Rope & Faggot, p. 252. See also James Elbert Cutler, Lynch Law: An Investigation Into the History of Lynching in the United States, rpt. (Montclair, N.J.: Patterson Smith, 1969), p. 178.

⁴⁵Rayford W. Logan, review of Arthur Raper, The Tragedy of Lynching (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933), in Journal of Negro History, XVIII (October 1933), pp. 485-486.

women, the Negroes have "qualified for lynchings."⁴⁶

The myth of the endangered Southern white woman persisted nevertheless in the public mind. At the Norfolk Journal and Guide, editors praised the women generally for the "rare frankness with which they discussed and declared themselves for justice for the Negro." Specifically, the editors thanked them for their

courageous repudiation of the demagogues who proclaim that lynching is necessary to the protection of southern womanhood and a bold denunciation of the system set up to defend and perpetuate mob law. All honor and glory to the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching!⁴⁷

Despite the statistics, black men continued to be charged with assaults on white women. In Georgia in November, a wealthy white woman was found murdered and a black man who had worked as foreman for her for years was charged with her murder. The Chicago Defender reported that,

By some unexplainable cause he was not lynched immediately, as is the custom....But in the meantime through some freak of fate the truth came to light and it was discovered that the white lady had at one time willed her plantation to her white overseer and recently had some difference with him and threatened to change her will.

...The black man was vindicated and released. This story is the true story—with the exception of this particular black man's vindication—of hundreds of lynchings and their causes in the South.⁴⁸

The regional meeting in Atlanta gained immediate attention in the national press. The women went on record favoring permanent eradication of lynching. In remarkably strong language, they resolved to condemn "lynching for any reason whatsoever and we recognize that no alleged crime justifies another crime." In addition, however, they took an unprecedented step in relating lynching to the

⁴⁶"English Newspaper," Pittsburgh Courier.

⁴⁷Editorial, "Southern Women On Lynching and Justice," Norfolk Journal and Guide, Jan. 20, 1934, p. 6.

⁴⁸"This Is a Metaphor," Chicago Defender.

general ills in segregated society:

We declare as our deliberate conclusion that the crime of lynching is a logical result in every community that pursues the policy of humiliation and degradation of a part of its citizenship because of accident of birth; that exploits and intimidates the weak element in its population for economic gain; that refuses equal educational opportunity to one portion of its children; that segregates arbitrarily a whole race in unsanitary, ugly sections; that permits the lawless elements of both races to congregate in those segregated areas with little fear of molestation by the law; and finally that denies a voice in the control of government to any fit and proper citizen because of race."⁴⁹

Their remedy, however, was far more conservative than their rhetoric.

Traditionally conservative influences tempered their progressivism and led them away from welcoming direct federal intervention, as the NAACP hoped for. Rather, the women endorsed "cooperation" between state and federal officials, declaring it "unwise to shifting to the Federal Government the full responsibility for stamping out lynching."⁵⁰ In opposition to that compromise, the editors of the moderate Norfolk Journal and Guide worried that "co-ordinate action between state and Federal authorities" would "lessen the responsibilities of the several states" and "might result in only punitive treatment of lynchers and speed prevention not at all."⁵¹

This view that Southerners could and would take care of their own lawlessness dominated opinion in the Southern white press. Guided by the

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Julian Harris, "Southern Women War on Lynching; Want Coordinate Action Between Federal and State Governments; Ask Justice for Negro; Condemn Policy of Humiliation, Segregation and Educational Handicaps," New York Times, Jan. 14, 1934. The reporter, Julian Harris, had won a Pulitzer Prize in 1926. As editor of the Columbus, Ga., Enquirer-Sun, he led an editorial campaign against the Ku Klux Klan and lynching. See Gregory C. Lisby, "Julian Harris and the Columbus Enquirer-Sun: The Consequences of Winning the Pulitzer Prize," Journalism Monographs (April 1988).

⁵¹"Southern Women," Journal and Guide.

passion of that argument, Southerners viewed the lynching murders in California as a threat, mainly because they gave credence and momentum to the new campaign for a federal antilynching law. "Governor Rolph's unwise statements and the publicity given them, together with the strength of public sentiment aroused by an epidemic of lynchings in several states, enhances its (the Costigan-Wagner bill) chances of passage," reasoned editors in Mississippi. While conceding that, "Many of the most earnest and intelligent opponents of lynching are southerners," the editors noted that

Many of these, however, opposed the Dyer act (1919-21) because they realized the dangerous loss it would inflict upon state's rights.

This combination makes passage of this bill a possibility if not a probability. It is of interest and concern to all southerners, but no southerner in congress worthy of the name will vote for the bill.⁵²

Opposition was not solid in the South. One month after the lynchings in California, the Atlanta Constitution surprisingly endorsed the antilynching bill, outright. This was particularly unusual because, as the Chicago Defender noted only two months earlier, the Constitution "has unceasingly breathed defiance to our every social and political right."⁵³ In supporting the antilynching bill, the Constitution sought to neutralize sectional friction. They noted that lynching was a national problem, signifying that the bill was not intended as punishment for the South. "Mob law," the Constitution declared,

⁵²"Other Papers Say—Another 'Anti-Lynch' Bill to Be offered in the Senate," Mississippi Daily Clarion-Ledger, in Chicago Defender, Jan. 6, 1934, p. 11.

⁵³Editorial, "A Step in the Wrong Direction," Chicago Defender, Sept. 16, 1933, p. 14. On this occasion, the Defender opposed Roosevelt's proposed appointment of Clark Foreman of Atlanta to be adviser on the economic status of black people for the U.S. Interior Department under the National Recovery Act. The Defender noted that Foreman was "a blood relative" of the Constitution editor and publisher, Clark Howell, and lumped both with "men whose racial prejudices will make them traitors to the government itself...we are compelled to feel that our economic welfare cannot receive fair and impartial treatment in his (Foreman's) hands."

"is no longer a sectional evil," citing the "recent mob law outrages in widely separated sections of the country." Thus, they reasoned, "such a law would be in like (sic) with the action of congress in enacting a measure making kidnaping a federal offense when the crime became so general in scope that it assumed the proportion of a national menace." The editors noted that, "A law making lynching a national offense would undoubtedly have a strong deterrent effect upon those inclined to place the authority of the mob above that of the courts."⁵⁴ That same week, in another lynching state, Maryland, the Baltimore Sun grieved over the lynching in Tennessee. There, a mob hanged a black man who had been acquitted after the jury found insufficient evidence that he had attempted to attack a white girl. Noting this irrationality and referring to the interstate nature of mob crimes, the editors declared that

When Judge Lynch sits on a case such little formalities as certainty of the guilt of the accused cut no ice. This is shown, not only in the Tennessee case, but in many others....An innocent man hanged by the neck makes as good sport as guilty one for beasts who masquerade as defenders of virtue.

The sheriff reports that the Tennessee lynching "was handled in a very quiet manner" and, as usual, "no one knew anything about it." We Maryland people understand all that.⁵⁵

Such expressions of sympathy and support from even the South, reprinted in the black press, were greeted as encouraging notes as the antilynching bill headed toward congressional hearings, scheduled to begin in February. In Pittsburgh, it seemed obvious to the Courier that "white people are certainly rallying behind this new anti-lynching bill. Some of the editorial expressions in Southern newspapers are so favorable as to be astonishing. Papers in Georgia, Virginia, Florida, Texas and even in Mississippi have expressed

⁵⁴"Other Papers Say: As A Federal Offense (Atlanta Constitution)," reprinted in Chicago Defender, Dec. 30, 1933, p. 14.

⁵⁵Ibid.

themselves as desiring such a law."⁵⁶

Amid these developments, President Roosevelt was being urged to take a public stand against lynching. At the end of November, as Gov. Rolph was being criticized for condoning the California lynchings, Roosevelt announced that he would address the forthcoming Washington convention of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. Actually, the advance notice of speech, to be broadcast on radio, contained no hint that he would discuss the issue of lynching.⁵⁷

Roosevelt's speech on December 8 focused on law and order. He condemned the new wave of lynchings, and criticized, without naming, Gov. Rolph. "We do not excuse those in high places or low who condone lynch law," the president said. He spoke in the unambiguous vocabulary of the NAACP, calling lynching "collective murder":

This new generation, for example, is not content with preachments against that vile form of collective murder—lynch law—which has broken out in our midst anew. We know that it is murder, and a deliberate and definite disobedience of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."⁵⁸

The president's speech reassured the churchmen and the antilynching campaigners. "Every Negro in America," said Bishop John A. Gregg of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Kansas City, "lifted up his head this morning and

⁵⁶Editorial, "More Pressure Needed," Pittsburgh Courier, Feb. 10, 1934, p. 10.

⁵⁷"Roosevelt to Speak To Church Council; President Will Take Part at Anniversary of Federation in Washington Wednesday," New York Times, Dec. 1, 1933, p. 4.

⁵⁸"Sheriff Gives Man to Mob; Body of Lynch Victim Mutilated, Dragged Through Streets," Chicago Defender, Dec. 16, 1933, p. 1.

thanked God for the statement of President Roosevelt on lynching last night."⁵⁹ In Norfolk, the Journal and Guide said Roosevelt's "public denunciation of the national crime as a 'vile form of collective murder' was evidence of a "quickenened national conscience." Despite the alarming number of lynchings—the highest in 10 years—the editors concluded that with presidential leadership, "we have a nation aroused at last to the shame and menace of lynch law, and that is the surest way of wiping it out."⁶⁰

In Pittsburgh at year's end, the Courier applauded the president and hoped that "we may be going through the last days of lynching." The Costigan-Wagner bill, it said, "will not only have the support of all intelligent Negroes, but also of a larger number of responsible white people than ever before. The majority sentiment is in favor of it, and if it is vigorously pushed it stands an excellent chance of being enacted into a law."⁶¹

Roosevelt repeated his condemnation of lynching in his first speech to congress in January. This speech raised the debate to the legislative level and indicated to blacks that the President, despite his preoccupation with economic stagnation, would push for an antilynching law. As noted in the black press, Roosevelt

denounced lynchings and mob violence as not only a violation of ethics and a disgrace to an enlightened civilization but in fact went further in recommending action such as a federal anti-lynching law which offers the only effective and certain curbing of these crimes.

⁵⁹"Churches Praise Roosevelt Speech; Federal Council Approves Condemnation of Lynching but Repeal Aid is Deplored; 'Moral Sag' is Foreseen; Secretary Wallace and Green at Washington urge Campaign for Better Social Order," New York Times, Dec. 8, 1933, p. 27.

⁶⁰Editorial, "1933—Lights and Shadows," Norfolk Journal and Guide, Jan. 6, 1934. p. 2.

⁶¹Editorial, Pittsburgh Courier, "The Last Days of Lynching," Dec. 30, 1933, p. 10.

The president called for use of the strong arm of the law, and immediate suppression "must be the result of an aroused public abhorrence."⁶²

The posturing in Washington, however, seemed to have little immediate effect in eradicating lynching in the South. Two days after President Roosevelt's address to the church leaders, Texas "answered in typical American fashion," reported the Chicago Defender, "by shooting a man to death, taking his body after life had fled, cutting out the heart and carrying it, still dripping blood, through the town of Kountze, dragging the body tied to an automobile through the streets, and finally burning it in the heart of the Jim Crow section." The style of reporting, as was typical, communicated the outrage of the black journalists, perhaps more so because the victim, David Gregory, had gone to a church for sanctuary:

He had been accused of assaulting and murdering a white woman. Because he had served a sentence once before for some petty crime, he was immediately suspected of this crime.

Knowing that he was being sought, he fled and took refuge in the belfry of a church in the little town of Voth.

Sheriff Miles Jordan, acting on a tip from a Race stool-pigeon that a "strange Negro" was in town, hurried to Voth with his "deputies."

Immediately they surrounded the church and yelled for Gregory to come down. As soon as the man appeared in sight to comply with the demand, a member of the sheriff's "posse" by the name of Chance, raised a shotgun and blew off one side of Gregory's face.

...So enraged were the members that they did not have a hand in his killing that they set to work to mutilate the body. They cut out his heart, still warm and fluttering, and carried it at the head of the procession.

Down one street and up another the jubilant citizens went dragging the pitiable body behind them.⁶³

A Tennessee mob answered as well. A young black man named Cord Cheek was arrested on a charge of attempting to attack a white girl. The grand jury, however, did not indict him, and on December 15 he was released from a

⁶²"President Hits Lynchings Before Congress; Lynch Evil Is Condemned by President," Chicago Defender, Jan. 6, 1934, p. 1.

⁶³"Sheriff Gives Man to Mob," Chicago Defender.

Nashville jail. A few hours later, a mob abducted him and hanged him.

Grand juries did not often seek to indict lynchers. In the Tennessee case, the judicial system at least made a show of seeking the guilty parties. In a gesture consistent with the supposed new national "consciousness" of injustice, a new county grand jury was given "special instructions to investigate the recent abduction and lynching" and to "promptly indict" the perpetrators if their identify could be determined.⁶⁴ Distrustful of the process, however, Walter White of the NAACP arranged for investigators to look into claims that the grand jury overlooked evidence from Fisk University students, who said they had taken down the license plate number of the kidnappers.⁶⁵ Given this context, the aftermath of a lynching at St. Joseph's, Missouri, became front-page news in the black press. Late in 1933, a 19-year-old black man, Lloyd Warner, was lynched after he allegedly confessed to attacking a white girl. By year's end, the grand jury the lynching indicted 11 persons.⁶⁶

Rarer of course were convictions. None of the 11 persons indicted in Missouri was convicted. In February 1934, as the federal antilynching legislation was coming up for its first hearing, the Atlanta-based CIC reported that since 1900, there had been only 12 convictions for 1,880 mob killings. This was argument enough, urged W. W. Alexander, CIC director, for at least changes of venue. There should be, he reasoned, legislation to lift lynching cases out of the "local atmosphere" and provide for their trial in communities

⁶⁴"'Find the Lynchers,' Tennessee Judge Orders; Lynching of Cheek Branded 'Outrage,'" Pittsburgh Courier, Jan. 13, 1934, p. 2.

⁶⁵"Real Cause of Lynching is Revealed," Norfolk Journal and Guide.

⁶⁶"11 Persons Indicted By Grand Jury In Missouri Lynching," Norfolk Journal and Guide, Jan. 6 1934, p. 1.

unaffected by mob hysteria.⁶⁷

The capriciousness and haste of lynch mobs was demonstrated repeatedly. In Labadieville, Louisiana, around Christmas 1933, a white girl was found slain and two black men were summarily accused. One, Freddie Moore, was hanged and the second, Norman Thibodeaux, was strangling in his noose when an elderly bridge tender shouted to the mob, "Cut him down! This boy is innocent. He just came into town today from New Orleans. I saw him get off the bus. He doesn't know anything about the killing." Hours later, the girl's step-father admitted he killed her. Thus, 19-year-old Thibodeaux became a rare survivor of a lynch mob, able to witness to a black reporter, as follows:

Freddie Moore was hanging from an overhead girder of the bridge. He was already dead. His clothes were all covered with blood. His toes were all burned where they had put red-hot irons to them. His hands were hanging free. They told me—and I found out later it was true—that the first thing they had done to him when they took him out of jail was cut off his testicles.

Later on they took pictures of Freddie, with a sign hanging to his feet saying:

"Niggers Let This Be An Example. Do Not Touch for 24 Hours. Mean it."

...they just had one rope that they hung Freddy Moore with, and they sent a boy away to get a brand new, springy rope. They put it around my neck, and threw the end of the rope over the girder to a boy who was standing there.

...They started to pull me up, slow. It was a new, springy rope. It isn't an easy death to die. It isn't hanging, like that. It's strangulation.

They pulled me up two feet. I hung there, strangling slow.

...I was hanging there and couldn't say anything. But I was listening, and while I was strangling I was saying over and over again to myself, "I am innocent. I am innocent."

...the old man's son, Harry Codeaux, got up on the side of the bridge and cut me down, and I fell to the bridge.

..."Get out nigger."⁶⁸

⁶⁷"South Afraid to Jail Lynchers Says Alexander; Only 12 Convictions In 1,880 Mobbings Since 1900," Norfolk Journal and Guide, Feb. 17, 1934, p. 2.

⁶⁸"I Was Lynched, But Lived to Talk; 19-year-old Boy relates tragedy in Small La. Town," as told to Louis Coleman, Pittsburgh Courier, Dec. 30, 1933, p. 1.

The front-page appeal of such stories was undeniable. In light of Gov. Rolph condoning and President Roosevelt's condemnation of lynching, the Louisiana case was a fresh outrage. The Pittsburgh Courier, which published a front-page photograph of the Moore hanging from the bridge, advised readers, "Gruesome as is this picture, The Pittsburgh Courier is publishing it for its moral effect." The Courier noted that Moore's mother "heard his pitiful, anguished pleas for help before (the) mob took him from jail."⁶⁹

The mood of the nation in early 1934 seemed attuned to some sort of federal antilynching legislation. American blacks, focused through the NAACP and the black press, had rallied their own people, as well as a significant number of whites in religious and secular circles. President Roosevelt had added his voice to the chorus.

Only a few clouds of opposition could be seen. The most viable opponents were the states-rightists who opposed federal intervention. The Journal and Guide analyzed this obstacle early in the year, noting that, "This opposition to a Federal law to punish lynchers is found almost wholly in sections where lynching is most prevalent." By early 1934, opponents of federal intervention were advocating reform of state antilynching efforts, preferring that more authority to intervene in localities be given to the governors. But the editors noted that such a reform could easily be defeated by local authorities, adding,

The task of those who would dislike to see a Federal law is to create sufficient public sentiment against lynching to revolutionize the whole system of state, county and municipal politics, as well as administration of criminal law.

The JOURNAL AND GUIDE firmly believes that those who prefer this way out are clinging to a social ideal that is impossible of attainment without

⁶⁹"Step-Father of Slain White Girl Later Admits Crime," Pittsburgh Courier, Dec. 30, 1933, p. 1.

some form of legal support from the national authority.⁷⁰

As the hearings approached, however, there was optimism that the opponents could be overcome by the force of reason and the weight of witnesses, as well as by lobbying. In calling for more lobbying pressure, editors at the Courier noted optimistically that witnesses in support of national legislation would include not only "leading constitutional lawyers" but also nationally noted journalists such as Heywood Broun, the New York columnist then launching the labor guild movement for newspapermen, and "outstanding Southern leaders to urge upon the Senators the necessity for such a law."⁷¹

The coming of the hearings focused the attention of the international news corps, as reflected in the black press. The Liverpool Echo's correspondent, Harold Butcher, relied on the NAACP's statistics and viewpoint. Butcher concluded that the Costigan-Wagner federal lynching bill would be a boon to American blacks. "Perhaps at no time since the days of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' have Negroes been so near to slavery as they are today."⁷²

The first strong note of pessimism for the antilynching bill was sent from the Washington hearings in late February. The Associated Negro Press reported that the bill faced defeat. This was on the same day that Senate officials

⁷⁰Editorial, "A Strange Contradiction," Norfolk Journal and Guide, Jan. 13, 1934, p. 4. The Journal and Guide noted the "insuperable task" of eradicating lynch law without national assistance: There were 14 states "in which lynching is frequently substituted for constituted law. In fact, 715 lynchings have occurred in these states since 1914. There are in these states approximately 1,200 counties, each with a local government of its own. There are in these counties approximately 3,000 municipal governments which feel that each one is a sovereign when it comes to handling a lynching."

⁷¹"More Pressure Needed," Pittsburgh Courier.

⁷²"English Newspaper," Pittsburgh Courier.

attempted "to bar Negro reporters from the press tables in the Caucus room of the United States Senate Office Building, where hearings on the Wagner-Costigan anti-lynching bill are being held." ANP editors Eugene Davidson and P.L. Prattis were asked to move on the grounds that the seats were reserved for members of the Senate press gallery, all white. After they refused, "Colored reporters from other newspapers took seats at the same table so that one was filled with white reporters and one with colored."⁷³

After the Senate hearings, the more astute black editors realized that a coalition of forces was aiming to defeat the Costigan-Wagner bill. In addition to some who had succeeded in defeating the Dyer bill in the early 1920s, there were new enemies "seeking in every way at their command to poison public opinion," wrote the editors of the Pittsburgh Courier. The Courier cited the "Strange Company" of four groups of "vicious, callous and unreasoning" opponents. First were the lynchers—"a sadistic crew of mental Neanderthals." Next were the Hearst newspapers "and others of their type that prosper on sensationalism, mire, bigotry and prejudice." Third were the "rooster-on-a-dung-heap politicians represented by Huey Long, who hold office solely by virtue of their ability to rouse the ignorant prejudice of the type of American citizen so accurately portrayed by Erskine Caldwell." And finally, the Communist Party—including "professional Negro Communist" James Ford—stubbornly contends "the Costigan-Wagner bill is a capitalistic device to quiet the masses."⁷⁴

⁷³"Seek to Bar Press at Senate Hearing; Reporters for Negro Papers Ordered Away; Refuse to Leave Press Tables at Anti-Lynching Hearing; Bill Faces Defeat; Senate Building Supt. Says Tables for Whites Only," Norfolk Journal and Guide, Feb. 24, 1934, p. 1.

⁷⁴Editorial, "A Strange Company," Pittsburgh Courier, March 3, 1924, p. 10.

That these sinister forces were possibly fatal to the antilynching bill was signaled in mid-May. In a special report to the Courier, its Washington correspondent penetrated "the cloak of political mystery." He reported the "rumors that enemy forces were working zealously" to delay a vote on the Senate floor. "It was scheduled to come up last Thursday on the floor of the Senate for open debate, purported to lead to its passage," the correspondent wrote, "but for some undetermined cause the effort was defeated. It was also listed for early this week, but the enemy forces again won and kept the issue from reaching the floor."⁷⁵

The Courier editors did not call for surrender but instead offered advice on how to "squench these discordant voices and make this anti-lynching bill a law." The remedy, they advised, was biracial cooperation—"united and sustained action on the part of Negroes and their white friends."⁷⁶ In May, as the bill lay languishing in the Senate, the Courier urged readers to "ACT NOW!"—telegraph congressmen and join one of the 400 NAACP branches.⁷⁷ And as late as June, nearing the end of the session, the Courier warned that, "Only the united protest of the Negroes can save it."⁷⁸

On the whole, no black newspaper was keener than the Courier in following the vicissitudes of the Costigan-Wagner Act and in rallying support behind the bill, mainly through the NAACP. The publisher,

⁷⁵"Hope for Passage of Lynch Bill Dies; Several Efforts to Bring Issue Up for Debate On Floor of Senate Have been Defeated—Senator Costigan Says Enemies Are At Work," Pittsburgh Courier, May 19, 1934, p. 1.

⁷⁶"A Strange Company," Pittsburgh Courier.

⁷⁷Editorial, "That Anti-Lynching Bill," Pittsburgh Courier, May 12, 1934, p. 10.

⁷⁸Editorial, "The Last Call," Pittsburgh Courier, June 2, 1934, p. 10.

Robert S. Vann, had been trained in the law before rising to become chief of the Courier. Vann's appreciation of the legislative process—and of the inherent dangers—permitted him to see well in advance that the bill likely would fail. In May, he conceded as much when he noted that

If it fails to pass, a heavy responsibility will rest upon colored people. They have not rallied to the support of the bill as they should. They have not contributed financially as they should have done toward the lobbying fund. They have not even written the letters and sent the telegrams they should have sent to their U.S. Senators and Congressmen.⁷⁹

Vann expressed a democrat's trust in the possibility of overcoming entrenched grievances through an expression of mass public opinion. He despaired that his readers—mostly Northern blacks—had not voiced their opinion with enough letters and telegrams and cash. At heart, he evidently understood the lynching problem was sectional, special to the South, but he hoped that Northern blacks would see that an antilynching law was in their own interests insofar as they had family in the South and hoped to return there at least to visit. "Some people do not seem to understand or appreciate," Vann's paper noted toward the end of the campaign,

the amount of thought and work and lobbying needed to get such a bill through Congress. Some interests, in order to pass legislation they want, have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars and many months of intensive work. Much work has been devoted to the Costigan-Wagner Bill, but that work has been hampered by an insufficiency of funds and a paucity of letters and telegrams to senators, representatives and President Roosevelt.⁸⁰

Vann's editorial writers wondered at the sudden stall in the move toward an antilynching bill. "Last winter colored people were greatly aroused about the lynching evil and eager to have the Costigan-Wagner bill passed," the Courier reminded, adding:

⁷⁹"That Anti-Lynching Bill," Pittsburgh Courier.

⁸⁰"The Last Call," Pittsburgh Courier.

As usual, however, their enthusiasm has seemed to wane. Why? Are they indifferent to lynching? Are they just careless? We think the latter is the case. Negroes do want to end lynching. Negroes do want to see the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill become a law. Negroes do want to see lynchers punished. But unless they make Congress know this with immediate telegrams, the enemies of the bill will kill it.⁸¹

In the next several weeks, the Courier revealed the strategy of the bill's enemies and the mechanics of their attack. "The plot to scuttle the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill is full fledged," the editors warned. "White enemies have done all in their power to prevent the bill from coming to a vote."⁸² The leverage of the powerful block of Southern Democrat senators, including Sen. McKellar of Tennessee, succeeded in bottling up the bill. Despite appeals by Senators Costigan and Wagner, the president of the Senate, Joseph T. Robinson, blocked efforts to bring the bill to a debate and vote in the Senate. "Senator Robinson," wrote the Courier, "turned a deaf ear, as he has all spring."⁸³ "Congress will soon be adjourned," the Courier warned. "Unless the Costigan-Wagner Bill is passed at this session, it will never be passed. Get busy. Send letters. Send telegrams. Do it now."⁸⁴ That same week, Walter White declared in the New York Times that organizations "with a total membership of 40,000,000" were being defeated because

a very small bloc in the Senate seems determined to keep the bill from being voted on....One Senator who comes from a State which has one of the worst of lynching records is reported as saying that the bill will be voted on 'only over my dead body.' Another Senator, also from a State with a very bad record, has threatened to filibuster if the President's request

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²"The Last Call," Pittsburgh Courier.

⁸³"Blocks Lynch Bill Vote," Pittsburgh Courier, June 23, 1934, p. 3.

⁸⁴"The Last Call," Pittsburgh Courier.

for a vote on the measure is complied with.⁸⁵

Three weeks later, the year-long campaign ended like that—quietly, without a public confrontation between the antilynching forces and the Southern Democrats. In late June, as congress was preparing to adjourn, the Courier lamented that "there is little doubt but what the Costigan-Wagner anti-lynching bill has been stabbed to death—at least for this session." Sen. McKellar succeeded in the parliamentary maneuver of blocking a vote on the bill by objecting to unanimous consent to consider the measure. At the NAACP, Walter White gave up, for 1934. White's statement, issued in New York, suggested the bitterness of the campaign. He branded all senators and others who blocked consideration of the bill as "assistant lynchers."⁸⁶ Although White was already planning for the 1935 session of congress, this antilynching bill and all others introduced during the 1930s and 1940s were turned into so many dead letters.

EPILOGUE

The failure of the NAACP and the black press to win in the legislative forum obscured the many other tangible and intangible successes resulting from the campaign in 1933 and 1934. Many of these benefits derived from high profile the campaign developed in the media.

The high degree of publicity in the establishment press helped to generate a climate hostile to lynching and, conversely, supportive of law enforcement

⁸⁵Walter White, "The Costigan-Wagner Bill; Its Prompt Enactment Urged as Means to Curb Lynching," New York Times, June 4, 1934, p. 16.

⁸⁶"Tennessee Senator Blocks Lynch Bill Vote," Pittsburgh Courier, June 23, 1934, p. 3.

officials in their protection of prisoners. The numbers of lynchings never again reached the peak of 1933 (24 blacks, 2 whites). During 1934, 15 blacks were lynched, and during 1935, another 18 blacks and 2 whites. Afterwards, the numbers of lynchings dropped precipitously—to eight blacks each in 1936 and 1937 and to six blacks in 1938. Throughout the 1940s, when the last effort at a federal antilynching statute was made, figures ranged from one to six a year.⁸⁷ There is no such accounting for how many lynchings of black and white men were averted during the period of the campaign itself. In Tennessee during June, 1934, one sheriff defied a mob of more than 200, smuggling two white men out the back door of the jail and taking them to Memphis for safe keeping.⁸⁸

Further evidence of a change in attitude toward lynching was the interest in passing new state laws, or in enforcing existing laws. In Illinois in April and May, the Senate unanimously passed a House resolution supporting the Costigan-Wagner bill or an antilynching bill sponsored by Congressman DePriest of Chicago, the nation's only black congressman.⁸⁹ The same session of the Illinois legislature also passed 98-2 an anti-Jim Crow bill — the "most drastic anti-discrimination measure ever passed by the State legislature"—stating that "persons of every race and color may come to the World Fair this summer without fear of discrimination."⁹⁰

Defeating poor legislation was also a victory for the movement. In

⁸⁷Zangrando, NAACP, p. 7.

⁸⁸"Sheriff Flees to Dodge Bloodthirsty Lynchers; 2 whites saved; Prisoners Accused of Rape," Pittsburgh Courier, June 16, 1934, p. 2.

⁸⁹Associated Negro Press, "Anti-Lynching Resolution Passes Illinois Senate," Pittsburgh Courier, April 28, 1934, p. 2.

⁹⁰Associated Negro Press, "Illinois Senate Passes Anti-Jim Crow Bill; Drastic Bill to Halt Jim-Crow at Fair," Pittsburgh Courier, May 5, 1934, p. 2.

Mississippi early in 1934, the Senate approved 19-14 a "Hangman bill" which would have allowed the father of an alleged attack victim to spring the trap at a legal hanging of three men convicted of the crime. After an "unprecedented wave of protest," the Mississippi House killed the bill. The "hangman bill" reportedly was passed in gratitude to the father who "used his influence to prevent the lynching of the Negroes on the occasion of their trial three weeks ago...."⁹¹

Clearly, the antilynching movement contributed the biracial dialogue. To begin with, the campaign, based on so agreeable an issue as opposition to mob murder, easily gained advocates among the white middle and upper classes. These were the people who were drawn into the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (eventually, the Southern Regional Council), the Southern Commission on the Study of Lynching, and the Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching. These associations in turn, as Robert Zangrando has noted, "helped generally to hasten lynching's decline." Although Southern law enforcement officials and juries changed only slowly during the interwar years, Zangrando notes that as early as 1933 Arthur Raper's study of lynching had documented 704 prevented lynchings during the preceding 19 years.⁹²

The campaign of course helped to build the NAACP as a voice for the black minority. Membership campaigns sponsored by the black press raised thousands of one-dollar and higher donations to be used how the NAACP saw fit in lobbying for the antilynching bill. The NAACP continued its efforts for antilynching bill as late as 1948, exerting political pressure from outside the South.

⁹¹"Hangman" Bill Shelved; Senate Passed Measure," Pittsburgh Courier, March 17, 1934, p. 2.

⁹²Zangrando, NAACP, p. 11.

Although the NAACP never defeated the coalition of Southern Democrats, the organization did manage to influence the senators indirectly by appealing to the reason of enough of the senators' constituents. Walter White, as Zangrando points out, "consistently argued that the NAACP's investigations, exposes, and campaigns for a federal antilynching law awakened public concern, created a political dialogue on the topic of violence and induced the South to reconsider its most blatant forms of racist aggression."⁹³

Finally, the campaign of 1933-1934 witnessed the maturation of the black press itself. The newspapers of the major urban areas found in the antilynching issue one which cut across racial lines and one which ran all the way to Washington. The campaign was the first major civil rights initiative involving the press with an activist black organization, the NAACP, and with political power brokers on the national level. During this period, the black press took seriously its role as a voice for American blacks, a voice articulating the newborn agenda of that campaign for civil rights.

⁹³Ibid.

PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTATION STYLES IN SELECTED 1931-1933 NEGRO
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ABSTRACT

Persuasive argumentation styles are examined in forty-eight selected issues of Marcus Garvey's Negro World editorial letters. The selected editorial letters, from 1931--1933, were scrutinized per James Golden and Richard Rieke's black rhetorical strategies: assimilationist, revolutionary, and separatist. Each Garvey editorial letter was read and coded according to the strategies it presented as an answer to Golden and Rieke's fundamental rhetorical questions: "What is the cause of the problem?" and "What is the best way to solve the problem?" Survey results indicate that the hypothesis posed: Marcus Garvey, often identified with the back-to-Africa movement, used all three rhetorical styles, assimilationist, revolutionary, and separatist, to reach and influence his public was proved. The evidence lies in the way Garvey used terminology and thematic structure within his editorials.

PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTATION STYLES IN SELECTED 1931-1933 NEGRO WORLD
EDITORIALS BY MARCUS GARVEY

BACKGROUND

The first black newspapers, started in 1827, were virtually dedicated to the anti-slavery issue, but they branched out to encompass other concerns such as the black experience in America, poverty, and illiteracy among their constituency.¹

Armistead Pride of Lincoln University, black press historian, has given a myriad of reasons for the almost sudden increase in black papers between 1880 and 1890. These range from

increased educational opportunities for blacks, support of black papers by religious and welfare groups working in the South to the establishment of political sheets for enfranchised blacks, and the growth of urban black communities that could support papers.²

Additionally, Pride says the black press increased after the Civil War due to "the black populace becoming more educated. . . blacks being able to vote provided an audience for politically sponsored publications. . . and black editors realizing that the editor of a paper has more influence than some other professionals."³ Though these conditions were working on behalf of black people, many papers were founded, but most did not survive to 1890.⁴

According to Henry LaBrie III, black press researcher and editor of Perspectives of the Black Press (1974), the black press can be categorized into three distinct growth periods. The first period, 1827 to 1865, was populated by

journals that were "short-lived and were started to lend support to the abolitionist movement in the North."⁵ The aim of most black newspapers during this period was to

attack slavery in all of its forms and aspects, advocate universal emancipation, promote the moral and intellectual improvement of colored people, and to hasten the day of freedom for millions of still imprisoned fellow countrymen.⁶

In the next period after the Civil War, 1866 to 1905, black newspapers grew rapidly from "a dozen, which began in April, 1865, to a total of 575 around the early 1900's" with over seventy percent of them being of Southern origin.⁷ The main theme of these papers runs through the history of the black press: the need for "self-determination, for self-definition and, most important, the need to speak for themselves (blacks)."⁸ Developmentally, this can be considered the most important period for the black press because it was in this period that the black newspapers experienced a type of new journalism previously experienced by white dailies in the early 20th century.

The third growth period, from 1905 to 1976, would be later recognized by Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal as "the greatest single force in Negro journalism influence."⁹ Myrdal later recognized so much potential in this period after the mid 1900's he anticipated the black press would begin to analyze world race problems and propose a variety of civil rights programs.¹⁰ Secondly, in this period, black and white America became involved in the Negro dilemma while the "black press served to organize and advertise the appeal for political, economic and social equality."¹¹ For this reason, "more newspapers were founded as

commercial ventures and to serve as news rather than propaganda organs, but cause papers (papers serving as advocates for blacks) continued to appear as well."¹²

However, in the midst of racial suppression, a black newspaper grew under the auspices of Marcus Garvey. Garvey, a racially pure Negro from Jamaica, came at a time when "Negro Zionism rose on the crest of the wave of discontent and revolutionary ferment which swept the capitalist world as a result of the post-war crisis."¹³ Garvey himself settled the dilemma for many blacks by founding the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914 and espousing the merits of the back-to-Africa movement. He was a believer that Africa was for Africans and that in Africa black people would be able to achieve their greatest successes.

Garvey began his career as a printer at age 14 in Kingston. In 1907, as a master printer and foreman, Garvey took part in a printers' strike that served as the foundation for his career as an organizer for members of his race to improve their social, political, and economic conditions.

Having a printing background, Garvey started several publications that were short-lived for one reason or another. His first, started when he worked in Jamaica in 1910, was Garvey's Watchman magazine followed by Our Own, a political organ aimed at improvement of the black people.¹⁴ Garvey realized that his publications needed national support so he quit his job and went to South America and founded Nacionale and La Prensa, two

Spanish-language papers that eventually ended up defunct due to lack of response.¹⁵

During his lifetime, Garvey "published Negro Times, a daily; Black Man, a monthly magazine; African World, a paper distributed in South Africa; the monthly Negro Churchman, and the Negro Peace Echo."¹⁶ All of these papers were used by Garvey to provide a national network of black consciousness papers.

In 1918, Garvey founded the Negro World, a weekly militant organ that was aimed at "the salvation of the race (blacks) demanding the creation of a great nation in Africa capable of spreading its protective umbrella all over the African peoples scattered across the world in the great black diaspora."¹⁷ The Negro World, considered to be Garvey's most important journalistic contribution, was an organ for the UNIA. "The World prided itself in a large distribution and circulation averaging about 200,000 at its best and 50,000 in an average week."¹⁸ Garvey used severe emotional appeals relying on race patriotism and black African nationalism to draw black people into support for both the Negro World and the UNIA, an organization committed solely to the back-to-Africa ideology.

Garveyism, a compilation of Garvey's goals, grew out of Garvey's nationalistic aims, much of which were heady propaganda. Garveyism preached the merits of "major campaigns for his shipping company, The Black Star Line, a Black House to match the White House, black generals, black congressmen, and even a black God."¹⁹ Secondly, Garveyism advocated global racial solidarity at a time when there was upheaval within and among the races.

The crux of Garveyism was the belief that "Africans the world over would never be really respected until there was a strong black nation, preferably on the African continent. Such a strong nation could offer economic, diplomatic, military, and moral support to Africans, wherever they might be."²⁰

Physically, the Negro World newspaper was an eight-page, five-cent weekly published in New York on each Saturday by the African Communities League, Inc., and Garvey. Each issue began with a letter from Garvey addressed to "the fellowmen of the Negro race." In this letter, which served as the paper's main editorial, Garvey told his followers to continue rallying for the black cause. He largely wrote memos of inspiration and perseverance for the black race while leaving the rest of the paper to be written by his numerous editors and staff people.²¹ "The Negro World, a vital source of nationalist ideals, was managed and staffed entirely by blacks who published editions in English, Spanish, and French."²²

Similarly, the Negro World printed a bulletin board for meetings at UNIA chapters around the country. The World allowed readers to follow the growth of the Garvey movement week by week in a section called "'News of Divisions,' a running account of the new outposts of Garveyism."²³

Each paper carried a section entitled "Our Women and What They Think" edited by Amy Jacques Garvey. It espoused politics with deep moral commitment. Mrs. Garvey suggested that

black women should be liberated from domestic jobs with white families so they could better care for their

own, and chided black men for not providing more secure lives for their women: "Be honest enough to admit your laziness," she wrote.²⁴

Mrs. Garvey also helped to promote love of natural beauty, the traditional African dress as well as African dances, and traditions for women.

Moreover, the Negro World served as an "open forum for many political viewpoints and offered news coverage of a depth matched by few newspapers anywhere."²⁵ Analysis of important events was continually featured and the paper also implemented a poetry section during the mid-1920's.²⁶

The format usually called for Garvey's letter on page 1 and was followed by the people's forum (letters), the theatrical column, and the sports page, which featured stories on cricket. Next in the paper were pages on health issues, the weekly feature illustrated section and the advice to the lovelorn column edited by Julia Jerome. Following this was the handwriting analysis page, the poetry section and, lastly, the Spanish edition of the paper. The light news of the paper consisted of the puzzle and kiddie corner and the dental talk page which featured hygiene tips for young and old readers.

Later in the depression years, in 1932 specifically, the paper was full of local and national news, notes from the UNIA chapters, and a weekly magazine and feature section offering guidance to women. The sports page of the paper was enlarged, however, and it was made up of boxing, theatricals, and regular sports items.

Additionally, the editorials penned by Garvey always began with a theme for the week's thoughts. Within Garvey's editorial letter, several subtitles were inserted to break up his letter, giving the reader a clue as to the important points he was trying to make.

The Negro World became a major tool for Garveyism to increase UNIA membership and broaden the concept of race separatism and the inherent greatness of people of color. Additionally, the Negro World was Garveyism's answer to what was considered the negative reporting of the Chicago Defender and the Baltimore Afro-American. Garvey himself saw these newspapers and other papers as money dens for graft and corruption aimed only at bringing out the worst traits of the Negro race.²⁷

Garvey despised other black papers if they were condescending in tone because he felt these papers were treating blacks as if they were children--not able to care for themselves or make rational decisions about issues that would eventually overwhelm them in both the political and societal spheres. Garvey's mandate, in his own eyes, was to "change the tone of Negro newspapers via thoughtful journalism aimed toward the promotion of racial pride, self-respect, love and integrity."²⁸

With these goals in mind, Garvey continued to publish his newspaper, even though he was deported from the United States in 1927 for mail fraud concerning promises he made investors about his Black Star Line Shipping Company. After 1927, he cabled his editorial letters to Hucheswar G. Mugdall, acting managing editor, who came to the United States from Hubli, India, by way

of Trinidad and worked as chief editor of the Negro World until the paper's closing edition in 1933.²⁹

LITERATURE SEARCH

Although the body of literature concerned with rhetorical analysis and black newspapers is limited, there is an interest among researchers to unravel the mystery of black rhetoric. Concerning persuasion and black newspapers, specifically, the research offerings are merely factual with few in-depth explorations. However, a few studies concerned with persuasion and black rhetoric serve as a foundation for this study.

Herbert W. Simons's research examines argumentation styles in terms of audience persuasion. Simons discovered a combination of leadership style and message appeal that is most likely to evoke self-determination among Negroes. He bases his theoretical constructs on methods of Negro influence and audience-message categorization.³⁰

Other pertinent literature is that of Parke G. Burgess, who, like Garvey, placed black power on a spectrum with morality. Black power is placed with rhetoric on a justice continuum by Burgess and Garvey in which black power is equated to freedoms with "the sound and fury of rhetoric lying on the intention merely to force upon the culture a moral decision."³¹

Charlotte G. O'Kelly, has categorized the rhetoric of the black press into four spheres: conservative, radical, reformist, and revolutionary.³² O'Kelly dismisses radical, revolutionary, and conservative labels for the black press because she says

these terms are indicative of the period in which the black press was considered by power holders to be extremist.

The most enlightening research on the rhetoric of black people has been done by James Golden and Richard Rieke. They have enumerated the uniqueness of black rhetoric through three veins: assimilation, separation, and revolution. All three of these rhetorical strategies begin with a definition of the source of the problem and end with a goal that has been preset by the rhetorician. In their model, to be utilized in this study, a problem is set forth and solved by a cooperative effort of the black press and its constituency.

In the book, The Rhetoric of Black Americans, Golden and Rieke propose that persuasion through assimilation, revolution, or separation is the key to regaining freedom and dignity on any level. Within each of these methodologies, black rhetoric is considered and discussed. Although these schema are not presented as ultimate truths, they do represent a way to conceptualize the broad development of persuasive black rhetoric.³³

Within persuasive black rhetoric, the first task is to select a strategy. The fundamental questions posed by the analyst has to be, "What is the cause of the problem?" This has to be followed by, "What is the best way to solve this problem?" After this is done, the three strategies are looked at to see which solution is best.

In assimilation theory, the primary assumption that emerges is that "the difference between the black and white cultures is

not inherent and thus inevitable" to be solved if both cultures cooperate.³⁴ This campaign is predicated on the melting pot ideal that all cultures can achieve equality with some effort. Sub-strategies utilized include "argument of ethnological equality, brotherhood within the Christian faith, citizenry of the United States, and intellectual accomplishment through formal education."³⁵

Counter to assimilation theory is separation theory in which the problem is assumed to be derived from the color differences among people and, therefore, it is futile to engage in rhetoric aimed at racial equality. The only solution to this type of problem, argue Golden and Rieke, is to create some kind of separate society. This distinct society may be different in location, culture, or legislature. However, in forming a separatist society

separatist rhetoric includes the possibility that once black men have gotten together and established some political, economic, and cultural identity and power they might be able to join other ethnic groups.³⁶

The predominant school of thought under separation theory is the "get off our backs" attitude directed to whites by blacks.³⁷ Under separation theory, location separation can be as drastic as a move to another continent, such as Africa, or to a borough within an established city. The whole idea here is that black people won't be bothered with any other people other than themselves.

Cultural separation "appeals against white colonialism, and is organized on the assumption that the black man in the United States is identifiable with nationalistic movements."³⁸ Cultural

separation coined such catch phrases as "black is beautiful," "black power," and "down with the white devils."

Considered most powerful, legislative separation is aimed at the "passage of bills calling for urban self-determination, or the creation of all-black political-economic units from former ghettos."³⁹ It is this separatist strategy that Garvey pressed upon his followers. This strategy was second only to the Garvey ideal of locale separation in Africa.

Lastly, revolution theory, not to be considered as traditional physical war, pivots around the idea that forming a separate society that does not plan on fitting into the existing society will produce change. This rhetoric argues that "only by removing power from those who have created an undesirable society, and giving it to those who can use it properly can the black man even reach his ultimate goals."⁴⁰ This ultimately translates in revolution as the only viable strategy.

Revolution strategy pivots around the idea that black people were taken from Africa to build up America purely by force. For this reason, revolutionary blacks feel that they cannot be happy with withdrawing from society or joining into society on a conditional basis, so they opt to create an entirely new society anywhere else, not just specifically in the African motherland.

However, in revolution theory, the rhetoric of persuasion is exercised on the status quo. The upperclass is given the option of making the revolution itself terribly violent or extremely pacifist. Thus the revolutionary theory serves as a mere

bargaining tool, or rhetoric of preparation, that may lead to assimilation before the ultimate goal is reached.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The Negro World utilized complex argumentation strategies to get its messages across to its readers. In fact, through perusal of the 1931-1933 editorials of the Negro World, it can be proved that the Negro World used peaceful persuasion coupled with power-vulnerables to clamor for increased freedoms.

Even though the studies discussed thus far greatly enhance the body of literature concerning black rhetoric, for the purposes of this study, the persuasion model proposed by Golden and Rieke will be implemented in an effort to discern which persuasive argumentation style was used by Marcus Garvey in the Negro World editorials. The research question for this paper may be stated as follows:

Does Golden and Rieke's rhetorical persuasion model extend to the black editorial rhetoric in the Negro World of Marcus Garvey?

The hypothesis for this study is that Garvey did use assimilation, separatist, or revolutionary persuasive argumentation in his Negro World editorials, not just the separatist rhetoric one would expect based on his back-to-Africa movement.

Though Garvey has and always will be identified with black separatism, during the 1931 to 1933 period, the focus of this paper, Garvey was exiled from the United States. Compounding the

physical limitations of deportation, Garvey was not at one residence. He was on a travel tour in London trying to drum up support from the League of Nations for the plight of blacks in the United States, Central and Southern America. During this time, he also traveled to other countries looking for people and organizations to sympathize with him.

Conceptually, the Negro World was a basic propaganda organ for the Universal Negro Improvement Association. It was concerned primarily with helping black people achieve greater equality through their association with the UNIA.

Three rhetorical strategies of Golden and Rieke will be used to categorize Marcus Garvey's editorial letters. Because frequent references will be made concerning these models, it will be beneficial to define the parameters of each term.

Separatist persuasive policies or a "Get off our backs" attitude are those that stem from the ideology that black people can achieve their greatest potential through societal isolation culturally, legislatively, or physically. Cultural separation can be considered the same as colonization organized on the assumption that the black man in the United States is the same as racial groups in other continents.⁴¹ Efforts aimed at the passage of bills for self-determination for the creation of all-black political-economic units constitute legislative separatism.⁴² Further, physical separation entails the return to Africa and the founding of a semi-autonomous black enclave.⁴³ In separatist rhetoric, the color barrier is blamed for the inherent differences between blacks and whites. Blacks work to hone their

educational, legislative, and societal skills into a strong power base in Africa so that they may cooperate with established societies at an advantageous level, if they decide this is best.

A revolutionary persuasive policy is one that uses the threat of revolution as a bargaining tool to make the white status quo adopt the demands for reform of an impoverished group. This strategy is built upon the notion that the black race built up America and, therefore, blacks cannot be satisfied with a small portion of the equality pie that they are so directly linked with. It must be emphasized that blacks can't achieve their potential by leaving society or joining society, so they create a totally new society. Within revolutionary strategy, the public toward which the message is targeted has two options. The acceptance or refusal of these options determines the actual viability of revolutionary rhetoric:

--If the revolution does occur, then it is considered the fault of the status quo because the empowered group did not adopt the demands given to them.

--Conversely, if the revolution proposed does not occur, it is attributed to the bowing of the empowered group to the impoverished group's demands.⁴⁴

An assimilationist persuasive policy utilizes the melting pot ideal as the prototype of an ideal society. Ideally, every effort is made by the black people to mingle with established society as equal citizens. This strategy is different from the others in that it is based on opinionated differences between black and white people. These differences, however, can be

worked out because, in this strategy, freedom and the good life are equated to desegregation on all societal frontiers.

SEPARATIST

- color barrier
- isolation from society
- cultural
- legislative
- physical

REVOLUTIONARY

- US foundation builders
- unsatisfaction
- can't achieve equality:
- leaving society
- joining society
- ... THEREFORE ...
- create a new society
- two options presented
- denial by status quo
- acceptance by status quo

ASSIMILATIONIST

- opinionated differences
- melting pot
- intermingling races as one
- desegregation==equality

METHODOLOGY

For this study, editorial letters on page one were selected from the Negro World newspaper from 1931 to 1933. The period of 1931 to 1933 was chosen because it was during this time that the ravages of the depression were most apparent upon the Negro World. In several Negro World editorials in early 1932, Garvey wrote pleas for financial support instead of his usual inspirational column. He asked for more reliability from the newspaper carriers because he suspected them of pocketing Negro World subscription fees. Similarly, Garvey often asked his patrons for patience because the Negro World was having internal power struggles, making abstaining in the UNIA seem a promising option for many Negroes.⁴⁵

Additionally, Garvey was experiencing problems previously unknown, compounding logistical difficulties with black apathy. The Universal Negro Improvement Association was declining in membership and monetary support. Thus, Garvey had not only to fashion his editorial letters to inspire hope for the future, he had to write letters that would cause more black people to follow the UNIA's aims of black redemption. Similarly, this period was the most uncertain during the Negro World's publication. Garvey and his editors were literally printing newspapers with little or no hard news. The bulk of the paper was comprised of anecdotes, personal columns and regional notices from all over the United States.

Hence, the selected issues in 1931 to 1933 is justified because during this period the Negro World was hardest hit by many forces: financial depression, leader exile, increased racism, splinter groups, war pressures, and apathetic followers.

A survey universe for study of the Garvey editorials consisted of 48 letters that ran in 1931 by weekly editions from August 1 to September 26; October 3 and 10; November 14 and 28; and the entire month of December. In the second year period, 1932, the Garvey editorial letters used in the study of rhetorical styles were dated January 2 through July 30. In the third year of the Garvey study, 1933, editorials were utilized from April 15, May 6 and 20, and June 3. The sporadic sampling of the editorial letters was used to see how Garvey relied on varying strategies at different seasonal times of the year.

Editorials for this study were written by Garvey and found on the first page of the Negro World newspaper under the title of "Garvey's Digest." Garvey's editorial letters were examined to determine if they fit into the rhetoric schema offered by Golden and Rieke.

Each editorial letter was read first for an overall impression of the status of the issues tackled in the Negro World at the time of publication. Secondly, the article was scrutinized for signs of any or all of the rhetorical styles. The basic questions proposed by Golden and Rieke were used to discern any rhetorical styles namely: "What is the cause of the problem?" and "What is the best way to solve this problem?"

For example, statements like the one below were coded revolutionary because they emphasize the need for blacks to have their own land:

We want a government of our own. . .we want freedom, true liberty, and real democracy. We must have all these things; it is not a question of whether the other fellow is going to give it to us under his government or not; it is a question that we must go out and possess ourselves of that which we desire.⁴⁶

In the above statement Garvey writes about the futile question of withdrawing from society or joining society. He also points out that there is no other choice but to demand and go after what belongs to them (blacks).

Likewise, ". . .in the face of a highly developed Negro civilization beyond the Western world, wherein men of our race seek the same opportunities in things economic as the other races of the world," Garvey is writing about revolutionary tactics

because he alludes to moving to another place where the black race has greater freedoms and chances at equality.⁴⁷

Evidence of separatist rhetorical persuasion is evident in Garvey's statement:

For thousands of years, we have mixed with the rest of mankind and now when all the races are boasting of their individual and collective progress. . .the race to which we belong has, perforce, to take the hindmost position because of the lack of this world's goods⁴⁸

Garvey emphasized that there were differences among all of the races and as they have achieved autonomy, so should black people in Africa. This point is important because mentioning the term "Africa" determines if Garvey's strategy is separatist or revolutionary. Although both strategies refer to the formation of a new society elsewhere, revolutionary strategy implies no specific place and separatist implies Africa as a place to establish a new society.

Another separatist statement is that "Africa offers such an opportunity for the higher development of itself and its people."⁴⁹ Garvey plainly states that a return to Africa is the only place that can offer the best development of the Negro race.

Likewise, assimilation rhetoric was used by Garvey in 1932 to propose equal opportunities within a segregated society. This is indicated by the quote, "As creatures of the same origin whether we are black or white we are entitled to certain rights and privileges, which are the common gift of nature."⁵⁰ Garvey says that all people share certain rights, they just differ in their opinion about how these rights should be meted out. Similarly, this quote emphasizes assimilationist rhetoric because

Garvey implies that black and white people should work together to remedy the cause of the problems.

But since man has been placed on his own responsibility, whether he be black or white or yellow, he must set on his own account. We will not unduly whine or complain, but reason among ourselves and see what can be done to remedy this state of affairs.⁵¹

DISCUSSION

Even though Marcus Garvey is overwhelmingly identified with separatist ideology, a perusal of his "Garvey Digests" suggests relatively even usage of separatist, revolutionary, and assimilationist persuasive rhetoric. Garvey used all three of these strategies to plead his case to his followers.

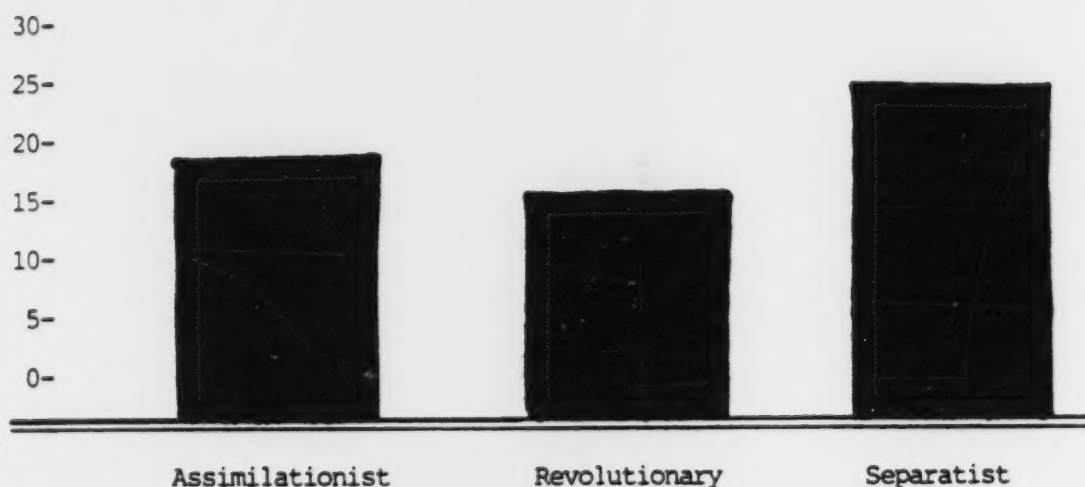
The first sample pool is from the fall of 1931. Within this period Garvey used mostly separatist rhetoric, secondly he used assimilationist and least often, revolutionary. Garvey was steeped in heavy racism from Europe and Central America during the late 1920's and early 1930's, therefore, his back-to-Africa campaigning was most vocal. Additionally, Garvey applied separatist rhetoric to help black people see that an exclusionary civilization was the only means of gaining recognition and equality.

In the second survey year, 1932, revolutionary and separatist rhetoric equalled each other, numbering 14, while assimilationist rhetoric was used only in 9 incidents. Garveyism, by this time, had many splinter groups, but the UNIA was too strong and predominant to collapse suddenly and

disappear.⁵² Hereafter in 1932, Garvey used revolutionary and separatist rhetoric to keep all of his splinter groups together.

Finally, in the 1933 survey period, there are no revolutionary rhetorical strategies, just separatist and assimilationist. It is evident that Garvey gave his followers an either/or proposition. They could form an African nation or they could join the established society. Garvey began to use these two strategies to force black people to move one way or another, staking their allegiances clearly.

SURVEY RESULTS



Sample universe == 48

Coding totals (all categories) == 58

Unusable samples == 4

The separatist persuasion techniques were used 25 times, the revolutionary techniques were used 15 times, and the assimilation techniques were used 18 times. (Four editorial letters are not included in this tabulation due to artifact deterioration or the non-existence of a Garvey editorial.) Since the universe for this study consists of 48 editorial letters, it should be noted that the tally of rhetorical strategies indicates 58, an overlapping number. Some editorial letters were coded with more than one rhetorical device. This is indicative of Garvey's efforts to use complex strategies so he could appeal to all facets of his audience at the same time. When Garvey used overlapping methods, he opted to bring revolutionary, separatist, and assimilationist people together into a cohesive whole.

Because Garvey is associated with separatist persuasive argumentation, it was expected that more editorial letters would fall under separatist rhetoric. This expectation would mirror the hypothesis: Garvey did use assimilation, separatist, or revolutionary persuasive rhetoric in his Negro World editorials. . . . At any rate, the survey results do show overlapping strategies. Hence, it is apparent that Garvey uses all of Golden and Rieke's rhetorical devices.

Garvey used separatist rhetoric most often, but not exclusively in his editorial letters. Often paralleled with the separatist movement, Garvey worked most potently with separatist rhetoric:

There is a new world revival of thought and action which is causing people everywhere to bestir themselves towards their

own security. . . thus we Negroes raise the cry of Africa for the Africans, those at home and abroad.⁵³

Separatist strategy like this was used over and over by Garvey to instill a back-to-Africa exodus among Negroes.

Concerning revolutionary rhetoric, used 15 times, Garvey alludes to the ongoing struggles of Negroes to right a moral wrong. He shows through his words, how unsatisfied the blacks were. Through his confrontation of their disgruntled attitudes, Garvey implies that the remedy to the problem is the creation of a new society, where blacks can exercise their rights autonomously.

Garvey equated moral rights with the dignity of men while seeming to speak for all blacks. He pushed the privileged aspect of an autonomous society. In his proposed society, blacks can be themselves, which means ultimate freedom:

We feel that there is a need for an immediate readjustment. . . . We want liberty, we want true freedom. We want the privilege of living and exercising our rights as men.⁵⁴

Garvey used revolutionary rhetoric to push black people into wanting a created society because he alludes to the fact that time is of the essence. The next quote illustrates this point:

"The Negro at this time is called upon to evolve a new civilization and establish firmly a culture of his own."⁵⁵

Garvey pushes a carpe diem attitude upon his followers almost as if he is saying that if the Negro wants his own civilization, he must do it now--he must seize the day because there is no better time than the present.

The white status quo denied there was a problem, but the exodus to Africa did not happen, most probably because Garvey died in 1940 and was unable to rally the black people around him as steadfastly as before in the nineteen teens.

Deserving mention is assimilationist rhetoric that Garvey uses 18 times in his digests when he wanted to hold his organization together.

Further, the tone of Garvey's editorials were less dogmatic during these depression years:

There is no room for prejudice since those that opposed us in their ignorance have now seen the light and (have) come to agree with us: let us take them in our fold. . . 56

This quote is indicative of Garvey's changing tone. He wanted only to solve any problems the Negroes may have had and to work with the white people to achieve harmony.

Garvey used assimilationist rhetoric to hint that the unequal times of the past may have come full circle. He implies that the best way to solve the black inequality problem is to intermingle and work with others, establishing racial awareness:

More and more the classes are beginning to realize and acknowledge racial consciousness that Garveyism is planting into the heart of the black brother which will ultimately build the only foundation for our future economic and educational structures.⁵⁷

CONCLUSION

In this paper, it has been beneficial to use Golden and Rieke's black rhetoric model to decipher Marcus Garvey's editorial rhetoric. Indeed, the hypothesis posed was proven to

be true for the selected issues within the period of 1931 to 1933.

Using Golden and Rieke gave this research a greater scope and applicability because with their model, future researchers can easily decipher rhetoric of black people concerning various topics. Greater applicability can also be attributed to Golden and Rieke's model because it has now been used to categorize newspaper editorials, not just speeches and essays.

Furthermore, scholars can use Golden and Rieke's work to see how contextual perceptions can color rhetorical styles. The implications of the three persuasive argumentation techniques could mean that Garvey used each of the rhetorical styles at various intervals to shape public opinion about Garveyism, Garveyites, and the perceptions of black people toward whites.

The hypothesis set forth in this research, that Garvey did use assimilationist separatist, and revolutionary persuasive argumentation in his Negro World editorials, not just separatist rhetoric one would expect based on his back-to-Africa ideology, was found to be correct. The evidence lies in the way Garvey used terminology and thematic structure within his editorial letters.

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The Tennessee Western Monitor and Religious Journal in the
Anti-Slavery Movement

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Abstract

This study concerns the Western Monitor and Religious Journal, which was published in what is now known as Knoxville, Tennessee, from 1818-1820 and one of its publishers, Frederick Steidinger Heiskell. During the two years that the journal was published, several articles argue for the abolition of slavery. This is particularly interesting in that Tennessee was a slave-holding state at the time.

As such this study seeks to discover what factors may have influenced Heiskell to publish manumissionist articles in the periodical and in an area of the country which supposedly depended on slavery to survive economically.

The Tennessee Western Monitor and Religious Journal in the Anti-Slavery Movement

The Emancipation Proclamation which became effective January 1st, 1863, came about as the result of nearly one-hundred years of political and social turmoil. A number of periodicals were produced to espouse the rights of blacks, and of particular interest to this study is the Western Monitor and Religious Journal. While this publication did not contain an overwhelming number of anti-slavery articles, it is intriguing to note that it was published in Tennessee, a slave-holding state.

Therefore, given that the Western Monitor and Religious Journal was among the earliest periodicals to advocate manumission, research sought to discover what factors may have influenced editor Frederick Steidinger Heiskell to publish abolitionist articles.

To answer this research question, an attempt was made to describe the economic impact and religious concerns of the Presbyterian Church at the time regarding manumission. Also examined were manumissionist periodicals and organizations which contributed to the spread of the movement. A brief discussion of the history of slavery in Tennessee is included.

Frederick S. Heiskell, Publisher

Little is known of Heiskell's personal life or activities and all of that which was found or that could be substantiated is presented.

Frederick Steidinger Heiskell was born in 1786 in Hagerstown, Maryland, the son of Dutch immigrants. In a personal letter Heiskell penned, he states that

I came to Knoxville a journeyman printer, having learnt [sic] the business in Winchester, Virginia, in 1808 and onwards with my brother William . . . Col. George Wilson, . . . at the close of the year 1814, was publishing 'Wilson's Knoxville Gazette,' and for that gentleman I worked journey-work nearly a year.¹

Heiskell arrived in Knoxville, (Knox County), Tennessee, on December 25, 1814. He married his first wife,

Mary Eliza Brown, on July 17th, 1816 in Jonesborough, Tennessee.²

August 3rd, 1816, Heiskell and his brother-in-law, Hugh Brown started publication of the Knoxville Register, which Heiskell would be associated with until his retirement in 1837.³

Eliza Heiskell's name appears numerous times on the membership records of the First Presbyterian Church of Knoxville beginning in 1816.⁴

On October 22nd, 1819, forty two men signed a promissory note which said that they agreed

to pay John Webb, treasurer of the Second Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, the sums annexed to our names, for building a meeting-house for the use of said church and congregation, which is to be built on a lot obtained from Col. Gideon Morgan, lying west of Prince Street.⁵

Of the signatures on the letter are those of Hugh Brown, Isaac Anderson, and F.S. Heiskell. Dr. Isaac Anderson, the minister of the New Providence Church in Maryville, Tennessee, would continue preaching there as well as the Second Presbyterian Church for several years. Heiskell and Brown printed a number of Anderson's essays and sermons during the years 1817-1819.

Frederick Heiskell and others attempted to form the Knoxville Library Company in 1817 but for the most part it was an unsuccessful effort.⁶

The first issue of the Western Monitor and Religious Journal, dated November 13, 1818, includes both Heiskell's

and Brown's names as the publishers. The periodical continued publication for nearly two years and was abandoned not for lack of subscribers but for lack of paying subscribers.⁷

Heiskell was closely associated with several well known political figures of the time such as Hugh Lawson White, Ephraim H. Foster, and James K. Polk. In fact

he was a trusted friend of Andrew Jackson, and fought his earlier political battles with characteristic vigor. He also knew Henry Clay well and was one of his earnest, sincere supporters.⁸

To explore the research question requires examination of the context in which the newspaper began and was published. This context includes background on slavery in Tennessee and the position of the Presbyterian church on slavery, since evidence suggests that Heiskell was associated with Presbyterianism in Tennessee. This context is discussed below, followed by analyses of the Western Monitor.

Colonizing the New World meant that a large work force would be needed for such tasks as tilling the land, erecting living structures, transporting goods, and helping settlers defend against Indian attacks. The first group of Negroes brought to the country arrived in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619 aboard a Dutch sailing vessel.⁹ Some historians believe these twenty blacks were not necessarily slaves. The Africans were better able to adapt to the harsh realities of the New World than were other races that had

been brought in to assist the colonists. Europeans realized that to harvest the wealth of resources available on the continent, even more laborers were needed. Attempts were made to recruit white men. Their passage was provided in exchange for four to seven years of work but, it seemed that the white laborers efforts were just beginning to be fruitful about the time their terms of service expired.¹⁰ In order to circumvent this, the slave trade was born. It would ensure that there would be manpower available to develop the colonies, permanently.

In the late 1600's, fur traders were pushing further inland into what is now the state of Tennessee. Slaves were used to help transport furs and supplies over the Appalachians between wilderness outposts and eastern markets.¹¹ Later, about 1770, settlers began to populate eastern Tennessee where they staked claims to farmland which led to the establishment of townships. Much of the land in the area was difficult to farm on a large scale because of the topography and many of the early settlers were poor and thus, brought few slaves with them. However, those who were slaveowners soon found that if they were to survive life in the wilderness it was necessary to develop close relationships with their Negroes. "In some cases the slaves were treated almost as members of the family with whom they worked, side by side, in the fields, or in the house"¹² Life on the frontier also meant that a black man had to learn valuable skills such as hunting,

smithing, bricklaying, and carpentry rather than just fieldwork.

As civilization pushed into the more productive farmland of central and west Tennessee in the 1780's, the need for slave labor increased. Settlers in these regions possessed larger tracts of land, more Negroes, and turned to a production rather than a subsistence style of living. The following data illustrate these points.

The U.S. population counts for the years 1790 and 1800 show the dramatic increase of white settlers and slaves in the Washington District (now known as Tennessee). The Census for 1810 shows further expansion into the area, by then called the Districts of East and West Tennessee rather than the Washington District. See Table 1.

Table 1
Population of Washington District/Tennessee
1790 (a), 1800 (b), 1810 (c)

	<u>1790</u>	<u>1800</u>	<u>1810</u>
White Males	16,548	47,180	111,763
White Females	15,365	44,529	104,112
Slaves	3,417	13,584	44,535*

(Of the 44,535 Slaves listed in 1810, 35,159 were in West Tennessee).

(a). U.S. Census of Population, 1790, p. 56,

(b). U.S. Census of Population, 1800, p. 2

(c). U.S. Census of Population, 1810, p. 1

The size of land grants issued in the eastern and western regions of Washington District is also very interesting in that on the average settlers in West Tennessee received

almost five times as much land per person as did settlers in East Tennessee. However, this could be due to the number of applicants and amount of land available. See Table 2.

Table 2
Size of Land Grants in East (d) and West (e) Tennessee
1788-1790

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Settlers</u>	<u>Average Size</u>
East Tennessee	292,577	710	412 acres*
West Tennessee	683,870	343	1,994 acres**

* East Tennessee composed of Hawkins, Greene, Sullivan, and Washington counties.

** West Tennessee composed of Obion, Weakley, Henry, Dyer, Gibson, Carroll, Benton, Lauderdale, Crockett, Madison, Henderson, Decatur, Tipton, Haywood, Chester, Shelby, Fayette, Hardeman, McNairy, and Hardin counties.

(d) Goldene Fillers Burgner, North Carolina Land Grants in Tennessee, 1778-1791 (Southern Historical Press, 1981), pp. 31-95.

(e) Emily B. Walker, North Carolina Land Grants in the Western District, 1788-1796 (1987), pp. 1-26.

The United States Population Census of 1820 indicates that Tennessee grew by approximately 162,000 persons during the period from 1810 to 1820. Population figures in this fourth census were still broken-out into the Districts of East and West Tennessee. Table 3 describes the types of people living in the two districts and the percentage of each type according to the census. Table 4 describes persons living in Knox County and the percentage of the state population that they constitute.

Table 3
Population of the State of Tennessee Broken-Out by
District
1820 (f)

	<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>
White Males	61,460 (35%)	111,940 (65%)
White Females	60,076 (36%)	106,251 (64%)
Slaves-Male	6,201 (16%)	33,546 (84%)
Slaves-Female	6,212 (15%)	34,148 (85%)
Free Blacks	1,163 (43%)	1,564 (57%)

(f) U.S. Census of Population, 1820, p. 32

Table 4
County Population and Percent of State Population Living in
Knox County
1820 (g)

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White Males	5,578	3.2%
White Females	5,548	3.3%
Slaves-Male	877	2.2%
Slaves-Female	948	2.3%
Free Blacks	83	3.0%

(g) U.S. Census of Population, 1820, p. 32

The data indicate that, in terms of white males and white females, there were nearly twice as many of each living in the western portion of the state. However, there were nearly five times as many slaves of each gender living in the western end of Tennessee, yet there was almost the same number of free blacks in both the Eastern and Western Districts. In Knox County, the five population types only

constituted two to three percent of the total state population types.

The dollar value of a slave was dependent upon several factors: the market price of cotton; the price of land; the age of the slave and his or her physical characteristics; and expectations for breeding. The following data (Table 5) suggest a relationship between the market price of cotton and the dollar value of slaves, based on the average New York price for upland cotton and the average price for prime field hands in Georgia. No figures specifically for Tennessee were found.

Table 5
Market Prices for Cotton & Slaves (h)

	Cotton, Cents per Pound	Slaves
1800	30.0	\$ 450.00
1809	19.0	\$ 600.00
1813	12.0	\$ 450.00
1818	29.0	\$1,000.00
1821	14.0	\$ 700.00
1826	15.0	\$ 800.00

(h) Ulrich B. Phillips, "The Economic Cost of Slaveholding," Political Science Quarterly (New York: Ginn and Company, 1905), XX, p. 267.

In 1809, the price of cotton dropped while the average cost of a field hand rose. This is attributed to the fact that the African slave trade was prohibited in 1808 which drove the price upwards for slaves already in the country.

In Table 6, one can see the total possible value of slaves in East and West Tennessee and in Knox county. The average price for prime field hands (male slaves, 16 to 45 years of age) in 1821 (Table 5 = \$ 700.00) is multiplied by the number of slaves reported in the three areas in the U.S. Census of Population for 1820. It should be understood that Table 6 describes the highest possible dollar value of all slaves in Tennessee in 1820. Not all slaves in Tennessee or any other state were considered prime in 1820, because of the women, children, infants, and elderly in the negro population. It is very likely that slaves in East Tennessee were not as valuable as slaves in Georgia because of the difference in the quality of the land in the two regions and thus, the need for slave labor. It is also plausible that there was a difference in slave prices between East Tennessee and West Tennessee for exactly the same reason. Table 6 merely gives an estimate of the total possible dollar value of slaves living in three areas of Tennessee in 1820.

Table 6
Dollar Value of Slaves in the East and West Districts of
Tennessee, including Knox County
1820

	<u>No. of Slaves</u>	*	<u>Market Price</u>	=	<u>Total Value</u>
East District	12,413	*	\$ 700.00	=	\$ 8,689,100.00
West District	67,694	*	\$ 700.00	=	\$47,385,800.00
Knox County	1,825	*	\$ 700.00	=	\$ 1,277,500.00

In the early 1800's there were primarily four religious groups working to abolish slavery in Tennessee. These were the Quakers, the Methodists, the Baptists, and the Presbyterians. The scope of this paper does not allow for thorough coverage of all of these group's contributions to the emancipation cause during the time that Frederick Heiskell was preparing to or was publishing the Western Monitor and Religious Journal. As stated earlier, evidence was found indicating that Heiskell was a Presbyterian therefore, this section of the paper briefly reports abolitionist activities of the Presbyterian Church, nationally and in the Knox County area, during the period from 1816 to 1820.

The gradual emancipation theme was well known by devout Presbyterians as early as 1787. In that year, the General Assembly of the church made known their feelings on the subject. They wrote

in as much as men introduced from a service state to a participation of all the privileges of civil society, without a proper education and without previous habits of industry, may be, in many respects, dangerous to the community; therefore they earnestly recommend it to all members belonging to their communion, to give those persons who are at present held in servitude such good education as to prepare them for the better enjoyment of freedom They recommend it to all their people to use the most prudent measures, . . . to procure eventually the final abolition of slavery in America.¹³

Presbyterian minister Dr. Isaac Anderson of the New Providence Church in Maryville, Tennessee delivered an address to the Manumission Society of Knoxville on August 17, 1816. In his speech he urged the Society's members to make their opinions known to the state legislature. He said

the Society will doubtless feel it a duty to write petitions and obtain signers in order to present them to the legislature of this state, at its future sessions, that laws may be passed in favor of gradual emancipation, and for the melioration of the condition of such slaves as must continue in bondage for life.¹⁴

Later in this same address, Anderson indicates that those who own slaves have stolen from God, because God is the only being capable of owning the soul of another. Therefore, it must be an act of thievery since two parties can't own the same property at the same time. He also describes the methods employed to capture Negroes in Africa and the ill-treatment of the same while aboard the ships of slave traders. Anderson encourages the members of the Society to strive to

prohibit the traffic between the states.
Let no more be brought into your states under any pretext. Pass laws in favour of gradual emancipation Let not infidels or time-serving politicians be chosen for legislators and officers, but choose ye out of the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness ¹⁵

On October 3rd, 1817, the Synod of Tennessee wrote to the Manumission Society of Tennessee and said that

we feel it our duty to use all our influence in the community, by every proper method, that those in slavery and ignorance be taught to read the Scriptures, and trained for usefulness and happiness . . . and that you may be happily instrumental of ameliorating the condition of a depressed and afflicted portion of mankind.¹⁶

This was in response to an address from the Society in which they asked the Synod's support in the movement. It appears that the governing body of Tennessee Presbyterians was in favor of gradual release, the educating of slaves, and the general improvement of living conditions among slaves.

On June 2, 1818, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, meeting in Philadelphia, made known their stand on slavery and the selling of slaves who were members of the church. This lengthy proclamation was later printed in full in the pages of the Western Monitor and Religious Journal. In part, the General Assembly said

We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another, as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves Slavery creates a paradox in the moral system; it exhibits rational, accountable and immortal beings in such circumstances as scarcely to leave them the power of moral action. . . . We recommend to all of our people to patronize and encourage the society lately formed, for colonizing in Africa, the land of their ancestors, the free people of colour in our country. . . . We recommend to all the members of our religious denomination, not only to permit, but to facilitate and encourage the instruction of their slaves, in the principles and duties of the Christian religion; . . . and as far as possible to prevent all cruelty of whatever kind in the treatment of slaves; especially the cruelty of separating husband and wife, parents and children ¹⁷

The General Assembly sanctioned the efforts of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States, in 1819. In supporting the plan, the Assembly believed that it would be useful to America and Africa to return the Negroes in this country to the land of their fathers. The General Assembly saw three advantages in the plan: a way to introduce civilization and the Gospel to the continent; a way to help stop the slave trafficking in Africa; and the gradual emancipation and the reduction of the black population in the United States.

In summary, the Presbyterian Church and East Tennessee ministers were advocating abolition very early in the century. The Presbyterian Church sanctioned educating the blacks, gradual emancipation, colonization, and the prevention of mental and physical abuses of slaves.

Anti-Slavery Journalism and the Western Monitor in Tennessee

Evidence indicates that Heiskell may have been influenced by several factors. Among these were the relatively low perceived need for slaves in the mountainous regions of East Tennessee, the anti-slavery climate in the area, the association with other manumissionists and manumission editors, and with the Presbyterian church.

In December of 1814, the same month that Heiskell moved to Knoxville, Tennessee from Winchester, Virginia, Elihu Swain and others were building the foundation for the first manumission society in the state. Swain and others met in

Jefferson County to discuss the formation of the Tennessee Manumission Society in which they advocated the "immediate and unconditional emancipation of slaves." However, there seems to have been some disagreement among the founders regarding immediate or gradual emancipation. It does appear that five members including Quaker Charles Osborn, the son-in-law of Swain, sought a quick end to slavery.¹⁸

Two months later, the group formally became the Tennessee Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves. They met at the Lost Creek Meeting House of Friends and adopted a constitution consisting of a preamble and four articles stating in essence that "freedom is the natural right of all men."¹⁹ Not long after this, several other societies formed in Greene, Sullivan, Washington, Blount, Grainger, and Knox Counties.

On November 21st, 1815 these groups met, under the direction of Charles Osborn and Presbyterian John Rankin, at the Lick Creek Meeting House of Friends in Greeneville, Tennessee to unite under one common constitution. They named the organization the Manumission Society of Tennessee and they, for the most part, appear to have endorsed gradual emancipation.²⁰

In late 1816, Osborn left Tennessee and moved to Mount Pleasant, Ohio where he became the minister of a Quaker congregation.²¹ One reason for his departure from Tennessee may have been that he believed in immediate and absolute emancipation and he saw that many of his contacts in the

southern state supported a gradual release. While in Ohio, he started publication of the Philanthropist, which began on August 29, 1817. Many historians regard the Philanthropist as the first anti-slavery paper.

Elihu Embree, also a Quaker, began publishing the first of two United States periodicals devoted exclusively to the abolition of slavery. He did this with the approval and cooperation of the Manumission Society of Tennessee. The Manumission Intelligencer was started in March of 1819 in Jonesboro (Jonesborough), Tennessee.²² In April of 1820, the name of the paper was changed to the Emancipator and continued to be published in Jonesboro until Embree's death in December of the same year. In the first issue of The Emancipator, Elihu Embree wrote

This paper is especially designed by the editor to advocate the abolition of slavery, and to be a repository of tracts on that interesting and important subject. It will contain all the necessary information that the editor can obtain of the progress of the abolition of slavery of the descendants of Africa; together with a concise history of their introduction into slavery collected from the best authorities.²³

Elihu Embree personally wrote at least one memorial to the Tennessee State Legislature concerning manumission. The petition said in part

the most prominent evil which at this time seems to claim our serious attention, & commiseration, is the subject of slavery. To this subject we beg leave to call your particular attention, desiring that you would exercise your judgment on endeavoring to do away some or all of the innumerable evils interwoven therewith. We would rejoice to hear all of who are injured in

their rights being amply restored We would most earnestly solicit you to seriously take into consideration this one most distressing circumstance to which Slaves are liable in our State, that of husbands, wives and children being saperated [sic] from each other by their masters, at such a distance as completely to effect a saperation [sic] of the most sacred & endearing ties We further beg leave to call your attention to the necessity of making some more effectual prohibitions of the introduction of Slaves into this state, not only by negro traders, but also those who may remove here, or pass through the state, believing that every instance of a slave being brought into the State is adding to the already anermous [sic] evil ²⁴

During the year prior to the publication of the first issue of the Western Monitor and Religious Journal, Frederick Heiskell's signature appears on a memorial to the Tennessee State Legislature. If Heiskell was a member of the Manumission Society of Knoxville, this action may possibly have been in response to the address by Dr. Anderson on August 17, 1816. In the memorial, which is very similar in some ideological respects to Elihu Embree's document mentioned earlier, the memorialists plead for the abolition of slavery and for the removal of the blacks to another country. They wrote

Your memorialists would in the first place, humbly suggest the propriety of passing a law more effectually to prevent the introduction of any more slaves into this state; humbly conceiving the number already here to be a sore evil; and that to prevent the growth of that evil, further legislative interference is needed

Your memorialists beg permission also to express to your Honorable Body, that their tenderest sympathies have often been painfully excited, on seeing the ties of matrimony and natural affection of the oppressed people, on whose behalf they address you, described by their owners; and the most endeared relatives torn from

each other and sold to such a distance, as effectually to prevent their enjoying that happiness from each others society, which was intended by their Creator

Your memorialists believing that the removal of the people of colour, as they become free from our own to a distant continent, would be productive of great advantage to the Colonists, as well as to the United States would humbly suggest to your Honorable Body the propriety of your forwarding a memorial to Congress declaring your accordance with other Legislatures, on the project for Colonization, now contemplated 25

This apparently indicates that Heiskell did believe in the emancipation theme. In another passage from the same document, Heiskell and his fellow memorialists felt that a Tennessee law requiring slaveholders to provide "security" to all of their freed Negroes was unfair. They suggested that this security be limited to those ex-slaves over the age of thirty-five or those "subject to any material infirmity of body or mind."

The first issue of the Western Monitor and Religious Journal is dated November 13, 1818. In the "Editor's Address", the publishers state the purposes of the paper. It is not known which of the two men, Heiskell or Brown, wrote it but nevertheless it is stated that they are strongly against "intemperance," "gambling," "horse-racing," "profanity," and "sabbath-breaking." Further, they espouse the education of women and the training of black missionaries for converting the natives of Africa to Christianity. On the topic of slavery, from the same narrative, it is stated that

it is in Christendom that the powers that be are brought into stipulated agreements for the abolition of the slave trade, that accursed traffic in human beings. A mild and humane treatment of those whom it has cast at a distance from the land of their ancestors is generally gaining ground, promising an increase of happiness to all concerned. In the American islands as well as upon the continent, the conviction is spreading, that ignorance among the Blacks is not more for the tranquility than the honor of the Whites-and that those restraints must be fastened upon the conscience and the heart which are to be the effectual safeguards of civil society ²⁶

This was the longest statement by the publishers on the subject. In other treatments of the theme, they usually reprinted editorials from other papers, simply supplying a medium for discourse.

In the third issue of the journal dated December 11, 1818, a plan for the slow release of slaves is presented. The plan, an editorial reprinted from the Milledgeville Reporter in Georgia, was preceded by another commentary. The publishers were of the opinion that

The following, amongst the many projects now in embryo for the abolition of slavery within the United States, seems to be the most practicable and would certainly feel easy on those it is intended to reach. It is the more practicable, as originating in a quarter of the Union least to be expected, such liberality ought not go unnoticed. Some plan for the gradual emancipation of slaves certainly ought to be adopted, however distant. . . . To get rid of free blacks, a short cut is at hands: Boyer, chief of Haytian Republic, proposes to take them by wholesale, and defray the expense of transportation to his dominions; a resolution that does him great honour; and there is every reason to believe that he is in earnest.²⁷

The author of the editorial from the Milledgeville Reporter is not identified. The writer proposed that a one or two dollar tax be levied against all blacks, free or enslaved. After sufficient funds had been collected, a group of individuals would travel to Africa and purchase territory on which to colonize. After acquiring land, slaves would then be purchased from "those who are disposed to sell, and convey them as expeditiously as possible."²⁸ The fixed period for universal emancipation would be thirty to fifty years and ". . . by rigidly adhering to the above plan the gospel will be spread among those who have heretofore been burried [sic] in idolatry and wrapt [sic] in superstition."²⁹

Heiskell and Brown's introduction to the Milledgeville editorial does suggest that they were not only in favor of emancipation but also sanctioned the colonization and slow release program. However, they appear to be more inclined to support the colonization effort in Haiti rather than Africa.

In the issue dated January 22, 1819, there is printed a report from the Synod of New York and New Jersey.³⁰ In this article, the writer describes the progress of the three black students attending the African School. The author says that finding intelligent negro males for the school is a difficult task. However, the public is beginning to support the institution and

the time is not far distant when a large portion of the American church will be united in one great effort to rescue from destruction

fifteen hundred thousand souls perishing in the midst of us, and to make them the instruments of salvation to fifty millions wandering from God in the wilds of Africa.³¹

On February 19, 1819, "Deliverance," the positioning statement of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church regarding slavery appears in the pages of the Western Monitor and Religious Journal.³² In this, three major points were made: to support the colonization effort in Africa; encourage religious training for blacks; and to prevent mental and physical cruelties against slaves.

Nearly one year later, the American Colonization Society reports on its efforts to secure suitable land in Africa.³³

The details of the annual meeting of the American Society for "colonizing the free people of color of the United States" are published in the February 18th edition.³⁴ Listed as two of the organization's officers for the ensuing year are Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson.

The final reference to slaves or slavery is found in the issue dated March 18, 1820. It is a reprint of a memorial to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States from the American Colonization Society. The authors outline their progress in purchasing territory in Africa and the transportation of blacks to the continent. However, the actual purpose of the petition was to enlist the government's financial support of the project.³⁵

In summary, what has been presented here concerning articles published in the Western Monitor and Religious Journal, reflect the doctrines and preaching of the Presbyterian Church and the opinions and writings of other east Tennessee leaders in the abolition cause. If a newspaper or journal represents the beliefs of its publisher(s), it appears that Heiskell favored: gradual emancipation and colonization; religious and formal education of blacks; preventing the break-up of slave families; and halting the further spread of slavery into the state of Tennessee.

Conclusions

Based on the data presented in this paper, it appears that the Presbyterian Church, the numerous manumission societies, and a few abolitionist periodicals/publishers may have influenced Frederick S. Heiskell to publish anti-slavery reports and editorials in the Western Monitor and Religious Journal.

East Tennessee was the least populated area in the state in 1820 regarding slaves. Along with this, the demand for slave labor in the region was low because of the rugged mountains and narrow valleys, which did not lend themselves to large scale farming. Prices for slaves were probably lower as a result. Since farmers in the area were not as deeply involved in the slave trade financially and did not depend on this labor force to gather and produce the cotton

crop to the same degree as their counterparts in West Tennessee, East Tennessee was probably the safest place in the state to make anti-slavery statements.

The fact that Presbyterian ministers and the General Assembly advocated colonization, education, the prevention of cruelty to slaves, and gradual emancipation is interesting. Heiskell's contact with Dr. Isaac Anderson possibly played a part in shaping his attitudes on the subject. Anderson was a very influential individual in the Knoxville and Maryville, Tennessee area and he later founded what is now known as Maryville College.

The memorial which Heiskell signed in 1817 is also very similar, internally, to the one written by Elihu Embree, who was involved with the Manumission Society of Tennessee. Another interesting point is that the petition on which Heiskell's name appears, is dated 1817, the year after Dr. Anderson addressed the Manumission Society of Knoxville and urged them to appeal to the state legislature for the gradual emancipation of blacks. Finally, there appears to have been a Society formed in Knox County as early as 1815 however, membership records for the group could not be located. As yet, it is not known whether or not Frederick S. Heiskell was a member of one of these organizations.

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ALICE ALLISON DUNNIGAN AND THE HASTENING
OF THE MODERN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

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ALICE ALLISON DUNNIGAN AND THE HASTENING
OF THE MODERN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

From the moment the African-American press was born a century and a half ago, it has been relentless in its struggle to champion the cause of black civil rights. The first black newspaper was founded early in the nineteenth century to fight for the abolition of slavery. The 1827 inaugural issue of Freedom's Journal explained the mission of the black press with the simple statement: "We wish to plead our own case. Too long have others spoken for us." (1) That noble purpose has been echoed in the names of many of the African-American newspapers that have followed--Alienated American, The Elevator, Mirror of Liberty, Freedom's Advocate, Herald of Freedom. And historians of nineteenth-century America have established that the black press succeeded in its goal of playing a major role in the abolition of slavery. (2)

More recently, twentieth-century historians also have credited the African-American press with serving as a powerful force in bringing about the modern civil rights movement. For example, in 1959, Maxwell R. Brooks wrote in The Negro Press Re-Examined: "The Negro newspapers are waging an all-out effort against second-class citizenship for racial minorities in American society." (3) A decade later, Thomas W. Young, editor of the Norfolk Journal and Guide, wrote in his essay "Voice of Protest, Prophet of Change": "It was the Negro press that started, sparked and nurtured the struggle for civil rights." (4) The service that black newspapers of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s

provided to black Americans has been documented by African-American historians and American journalism historians alike.(5)

In contrast, observers have criticized the mainstream news media for not covering the racial problems that led to the movement. For example, when President Lyndon B. Johnson created the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to examine the mass media, the commission reported: "We believe that the media have thus far failed to report adequately on the causes and consequences of civil disorders and the underlying problems of race relations."(6)

Historians studying the 3,000 African-American newspapers that have been published in the last century and a half(7) have identified several specific traits of the black press as having hastened the mid-twentieth-century drive to outlaw racial discrimination. These common characteristics create a strong sense of what the black press is and how this particular genre of American journalism differs from the mainstream news media.

This list of characteristics, however, is not unique to the black press. For this same list also describes the writing of another journalistic minority: women journalists. A scholar familiar with the history of women in American journalism can demonstrate that the same characteristics have been used to distinguish women journalists from their male counterparts. When the two sets of characteristics--those of the black press and those of women journalists--are juxtaposed, the degree of similarity between them is striking.

This paper is predicated on the belief that this similarity

is sufficiently strong to warrant an examination of precisely how these characteristics have manifested themselves in the writing of black women journalists. Further, this paper is based on the belief that, because of this strong similarity, black women journalists writing for the black press may have been in a unique position to serve as a catalyst for the modern civil rights movement.

In addition, such an examination serves to illuminate an area of American journalism heretofore largely unexplored by journalism historians. For there currently is no significant scholarship focused specifically on the subject of the role that African-American women journalists played in the evolution of the modern civil rights movement.(8)

The specific goal of this paper is to examine the published work of one of the few prominent black women journalists of the late 1940s and the 1950s, Alice Allison Dunnigan. Concurrently, the findings of this paper, although limited in scope, suggest that the role that African-American women journalists played in hastening the coming of the modern civil rights movement may have been substantial--and worthy of further exploration and analysis.

The most pervasive of the traits that describe black newspapers is their absolute and unflinching tradition of protest against prejudice based on race and color. In a 1967 essay, "Beyond Objectivity: The 'Fighting' Press," for example, Henry Lee Moon, press secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, wrote: "The Negro press is essentially and increasingly a protest press. . . . not only the recorder but also the voice of Negro protest."(9)

A second distinctive characteristic of African-American newspapers is a tendency for their news accounts to contain an emotional intensity not generally found in newspapers. In his history of the black press, Roland E. Wolseley wrote: "It is likely that the fervor of campaigning (for black civil rights) will rub off on the presumably objective news stories. . . . One way is to use emotion-laden words in what supposedly is a straight news story." (10) Such a strong sense of passion in the lexicon of the black press clearly has helped motivate black Americans to battle the injustices committed against their race.

A third characteristic of the black press that may have contributed to the coming of the modern civil rights movement is a propensity for black reporters to bring their own life experiences into their coverage of issues and events. Scholars of African-American newspapers have observed that coverage clearly demonstrates that reporters and editors share a common experience with their readers. Wolseley wrote of black newspapers: "Their readers look to the press to find out 'what really went on' when a news story about blacks breaks, even though it may be covered by the white media." (11)

A fourth trait is that the black press has provided sustained coverage of events and issues that the mainstream press has ignored, thereby helping galvanize American blacks into a single, unified community. The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979, included the following observation about the 1950s:

As American society became more homogeneous and something of an identity crisis began affecting many of its members,

the black weeklies began fulfilling a need
for providing that kind of news that
encouraged a sense of community for blacks.(12)

This sense of community fostered a growing sense of solidarity
among African-American people throughout the country.

The application of these same four characteristics to
American women journalists is well documented in the major
studies of American women journalists. The tradition of women
journalists as protesters and crusaders for reform was described
by Marion Marzolf in her 1977 book, Up from the Footnote: A
History of Women Journalists.(13) Marzolf credited Anne Royall
as beginning the tradition in the early nineteenth century by
publishing her own Washington newspaper that "was full of
sympathy for the underdog."(14) Marzolf pointed out that
Margaret Fuller(15) and Jane Grey Swisshelm(16) further
established the protest tradition last century and that numerous
women journalists have continued to expose injustice during this
century.(17)

American women journalists' strength in being able to write
stories containing a strong emotional element was described in
the first history of women journalists, Ladies of the Press.(18)
In her 1936 book, Ishbel Ross observed: "They put more emotion,
more color, more animation into their work. . . . This is the
special field for women."(19)

The tendency for women journalists to bring their own life
experiences into their writing was discussed by Kay Mills in her
recent history of women journalists, A Place in the News: From
the Women's Pages to the Front Page. Mills said women developed

this technique in order to move into the newsroom. She observed: "They weren't going to get the job or be able to do it if they didn't have a gimmick such as going around the world or exploring the seamy side of life." (20)

The role that women journalists have played in building the community of American women was well stated by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt when she began the first of her historic women's White House press conferences. Roosevelt, herself a journalist, told the women reporters that their position was crucial to the evolution of American women. She said: ". . . a newspaper woman's job (is) to make her impressions go to leading the women in the country to form a general attitude of mind and thought." (21) Scholars have documented that American women journalists have, in fact, helped to strengthen the sense of community among members of their gender. (22)

Alice Allison Dunnigan won her place of prominence among American women journalists in June of 1947 when she broke the barriers of race and gender to become the first African-American woman to receive credentials to cover the United States Congress. (23) In August of that year, Dunnigan also became the first black woman accredited to cover the White House, the United States Supreme Court, the United States Department of State, and the District of Columbia Police Department. The next summer, she added the distinction of becoming the first black woman journalist to travel with a President of the United States, joining Harry S. Truman for a cross-country train trip. (24) Dunnigan covered news from the nation's capital fulltime from 1947 to 1961. (25) Specifically, Dunnigan served as chief of the

7.

Washington bureau of the Associated Negro Press,(26) a national news service that supplied the black community of the United States and Africa with news relevant to them but not provided by the mainstream press. The Associated Negro Press was committed to covering national news, and Dunnigan's stories routinely appeared on the front pages of the 100 daily and weekly black newspapers subscribing to the news service.(27)

There is no question that, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, Dunnigan wrote many protest-oriented stories intended to bring about reform. Dunnigan's autobiography included this statement: "While the role of the Black press, like other newspapers, is that of objectively reporting the news as it happens, it has another function equally as important--that of fighting oppression."(28) And during a 1979 interview with a Washington Post reporter, Dunnigan said: "I always felt a journalist should be a crusader."(29) Dunnigan clearly was an activist as well as a journalist, using her written work as a tool to bring about change in the treatment of African-Americans.

Many of Dunnigan's most hard-hitting stories described events that the mainstream press ignored, even though Dunnigan's stories about the events received front-page treatment in black newspapers. In 1950, for example, Dunnigan reported that a Georgia congressman had publicly called a civil rights leader a "black son-of-a-bitch."(30) The incident took place in a congressional hearing that was open to the public, but mainstream Washington newspapers did not report it.(31) Dunnigan, on the other hand, wrote a spot news story and a follow-up story.(32)

Dunnigan also frequently developed protest-oriented stories

by adopting a perspective different from that of the reporters writing for mainstream newspapers. Sometimes this tact meant that Dunnigan simply reported what was not happening. As the United States Congress neared the end of its 1948 session, for instance, Dunnigan reported that congressmen had ignored legislation that would have benefited blacks. Dunnigan's lead story on the front page of the Atlanta Daily World began:

In just a few more days, congress will adjourn without having passed a single piece of legislation designed to help the average American citizen and his family.(33)

Later in the story, Dunnigan painstakingly described the current status of three controversial bills: to ban the poll tax in seven Southern states, to make lynching a federal crime for which lynchers and police collaborators both could be punished, and to establish a federal agency to guard against racial bias in employment practices. Most mainstream newspapers, on the other hand, paid scant attention to these bills, concentrating, instead, on major appropriations bills.(34) But Dunnigan mentioned the appropriations bills only in the last paragraph of her story, stating: "When these 'must' bills come up, everything else must go back on the shelves to be buried under the dust." (35) The Washington Post and Washington Evening Star printed a total of seven congressional stories on their front pages that day and those stories described fourteen pieces of legislation,(36) but none of the stories mentioned the four bills described in Dunnigan's story.

A year later the two Washington newspapers again ignored an event that Dunnigan turned into national news for black readers. Dunnigan's story reported that the District of Columbia chapter of the National Lawyers Guild had released an opinion that two anti-discrimination, which had been enacted at the end of the nineteenth century, were still in effect.(37) Four years later, in 1953, those same two laws were used in a successful effort to integrate Washington, D.C., restaurants.(38)

Dunnigan also crusaded against racial injustice by illuminating numerous cases of discrimination against African-Americans. Hers often were the only stories about such incidents. If Dunnigan had not written about these incidents, they presumably would have gone unreported. In April of 1948, for example, Dunnigan reported that a six-foot cross, a symbol of the Ku Klux Klan, had been burned in a vacant lot in Northeast Washington.(39) The story ran on page one of the Washington Afro-American, but no coverage of the incident appeared in the city's two major dailies, the Washington Post and the Washington Evening Star.(40) The same edition of the Afro-American carried another Dunnigan story about white families having filed a law suit in an attempt to evict a black family from a house that they had purchased in a white neighborhood of Washington.(41) Again, neither the Post nor the Star reported the event.(42)

Dunnigan's published writing also provides examples of how she, like other reporters writing for the black press, may have helped hasten the coming of the modern civil rights movement by writing with an emotional intensity generally not found in newspaper writing. This emotionalism was the manifestation of

the feelings of a caring individual who constantly investigated and reported human injustice. Dunnigan was a spirited woman, and her strong personal reaction to the events she covered is reflected in her written work.

Some of Dunnigan's most passionate writing described the case of Rosa Lee Ingram, a forty-year-old Georgia widow. In 1947, three months after her husband's death, Ingram learned that her mule and hogs had strayed onto the adjoining property farmed by a sixty-six-year-old white sharecropper. When Ingram and her two oldest sons, aged seventeen and fourteen, went onto the man's property to retrieve the livestock, he threatened to kill the animals. When Ingram protested, the man hit her with the butt of his rifle, inflicting bloody wounds to her head and upper body. Ingram's sons defended their mother, and, by the end of the fight, the sharecropper lay dead.

Ingram and her sons were arrested immediately, allowing the widow no time to make provisions for her other ten children, who ranged in age from eleven years to seventeen months. Ingram and her sons were held without bail for three months. Then, in a one-day trial before an all-white jury, they were found guilty of first-degree murder.

In 1949, Dunnigan joined a committee of concerned citizens who traveled to Georgia to investigate the case. Her series of five stories reported the fact that many people in the community believed that the sharecropper was enraged not as much by the trespassing of the livestock as by Ingram's rejection of his sexual advances. Descriptive passages from Dunnigan's stories demonstrate that she possessed the ability to create strong

emotional reactions in her readers. In one story, for example, Dunnigan described Ingram relating her story to members of the committee:

Tears streamed down the cheeks of some members of the delqation (sic), others dabbed their eyes with their handkerchiefs. . . .

At the close of the interview Dr. Gene Weltfish, professor of anthropology at Columbia University, who was a member of the delegation, planted a kiss upon the cheek of Mrs. Ingram.(43)

Dunnigan had another opportunity to write with emotional intensity when she covered the "Martinsville Seven" case. In 1949, seven young black men in Martinsville, Virginia, were convicted of raping a white woman. Dunnigan traveled to the southern Virginia town and talked with the relatives of the young men. Her observations and interviews allowed her to write heart-wrenching passages such as this one:

All the boys write home on an average of twice a week. It's the cramped scribbling of near-illiterates who had to quit school and go to work in a textile mill or furniture factory to help made (sic) ends meet at home. . . .

When you ask to see the letters the boys have written home, there's no fumbling, no quessing where the letters are. The mothers go straight to the family Bible where they are neatly

folded and tucked away with locks of
the children's hair.(44)

A topic about which Dunnigan wrote with a very different tone of emotional intensity--one of anger and outrage--was the civil rights policy of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the only Republican president she ever covered.(45) Dunnigan was convinced that the Bureau of Engraving and Printing discriminated against black job applicants. So during the April 29, 1954, White House press conference, she asked Eisenhower what his administration was doing to change the situation. Eisenhower, in a clipped tone, retorted: "Have you gone to the proper departments of government to ask that question? I mean, have you gone to the Bureau of Engraving, and have you gone to the Civil Service Commission and asked that question?" Dunnigan began to respond: "I haven't asked the question, but I understood--" But Eisenhower cut her off, saying: "I like to come here completely prepared as well as I can to answer the questions that come up; but when you ask me about the details of how some particular thing has been handled, I can't be expected, I think, to know too much about it."(46)

After the incident, Eisenhower boycotted Dunnigan. During the fifteen months of his presidency that preceded the fiery exchange (February 1953 through April 1954), Eisenhower had called on Dunnigan seven times; in the eighty-one months after the incident (May 1954 through January 1961), he called on her only three times.(47) The frequency with which he called on Dunnigan had plummeted from once every two months to once every twenty-seven months, and some members of the press corps reported

the boycott.(48)

During that boycott, Dunnigan's coverage of the Eisenhower administration included strong, emotionally charged words. She turned the boycott into a news issue that she reported on the front pages of black newspapers across the country. A typical story began:

White House press conferences have become a forum for the favorite few. The old spirit of democracy and fair play has vanished and only the privileged characters are putting on the show. . . .

This is something which should be protested by that group of people who threw their weight behind Mr. Eisenhower.(49)

Dunnigan's dissatisfaction with Eisenhower was reflected in her published articles about other topics as well. After the press conference incident, she undertook, in her coverage, a personal vendetta against the Republican president. For example, she began a 1957 article with this paragraph:

President Eisenhower said in effect this week that his present work load plus his frequent play periods kept him too busy to investigate the violence which is currently taking place in the south.(50)

It seems likely that Dunnigan purposely chose the subjective phrasing of "play periods" to create a negative emotional reaction among her readers.

In another instance, when Dunnigan reported that national

leaders were encouraging Eisenhower to take a stand on civil rights, she began her story with this unorthodox description: "Golf playing, world traveling President Eisenhower. . . ." (51) In another instance, she began a story: "President Eisenhower, typically evasive and indecisive. . . ." (52)

Dunnigan clearly brought her own life experiences into her newspaper writing. Every day she drew upon the personal traumas in her own life as she covered the struggles of other African-Americans. During her first year as a Washington reporter, she told her boss: "I fight constantly against exploitation. I have seen so much human suffering." (53)

Dunnigan overcame tremendous barriers, and her achievements speak to the triumph of the human spirit. Dunnigan's grandparents were slaves and her father was a sharecropper. (54) She taught in one-room schools in rural Kentucky for eighteen years, earning a salary so meager that she was forced to clean houses for white families during the summers. (55) Even after establishing herself as a Washington reporter, Dunnigan still struggled with poverty. Because of the financial difficulties that have always plagued the black press, (56) her annual income was less than that of the average African-American woman in Washington, even though most of those women worked as domestics. (57) Her salary was so low that her meals often consisted of nothing but pigs ears and turnips. (58) 

Dunnigan struggled in her personal relationships as well. She married a dirt farmer when she was eighteen years old and divorced him four years later. (59) A year after the divorce, she married for a second time and soon gave birth to her only child.

But when the infant was four months old, Dunnigan was forced to turn him over to her parents so that she could pursue her career.(60) When Dunnigan moved to Washington, her ten-year-old son remained in Kentucky, not joining his mother for seven more years. Dunnigan's marriage soon disintegrated to the point that it included both mental and physical cruelty, leading to a second divorce.(61)

Evidence that Dunnigan drew upon her life experiences can be found in much of her writing. In a story about the Ingram case, for example, she argued that a woman should be appointed to oversee the case of the widowed Georgia mother, stating:

While a man looks at the whole situation only from a business angle a woman will look out for the humanitarian interests. A woman knows what it means for a mother to be deprived of the right to see her children for almost a year. Thus, a woman would see to it that the children visited their mother often.(62)

The references to poverty and deprivation suggest that the article was written by a person who had faced these same problems. Likewise, the allusions to the feelings of a mother separated from her children suggest that the author also had felt the pain of such a loss.

Dunnigan's published work about the "Martinsville Seven" case also provides evidence that the author possessed intimate knowledge about the plight of poor blacks living in the rural South. Dunnigan's articles provided a sociological study of Martinsville, a city dominated by a textile mill, and the single

block where its black population was confined. One story read:

Dr. D.O. Baldwin, who owns the block, spends most of his nights sewing. Sewing up wounds that heal the outside. But there are wounds that his suture cannot reach--wounds of spirit. The mill workers, who are last hired, first fired, and never promoted, try to sooth (sic) these wounds with whiskey and beer in a dry county.(63)

Such insight does not come from a reporter detached from the story. It is the understanding of a person whose own life carries the scars of hunger and racial prejudice.

In bringing her life experiences to her work, Dunnigan sometimes referred to herself in her stories and wrote from the first-person point of view. When giving the names of the persons who traveled to Georgia to investigate the Ingram case, for example, she concluded the list with "Yours Truly."(64) And in the "Martinsville Seven" stories, Dunnigan used the first person pronouns "we" and "us."(65)

Recognizing that readers were interested in the experiences of a pioneering black woman, Dunnigan frequently wrote about herself. For example, when Dunnigan accompanied President Truman on his 1948 campaign trip through the West, one of her stories included this passage:

The colored reporters were objects of curiosity in many cities and villages. Although few open comments were made, the spectators really focused their eyes on them.

In Los Angeles comments were loud, especially around car 16 during a parade. This car included a white, a Chinese and a colored woman.(66)

It was also during that trip that Dunnigan translated a personal experience into national news. In Cheyenne, Wyoming, transportation had not been provided for the press corps. So when the president left the train, the sixty reporters began walking behind his motorcade. Dunnigan, wearing a press badge three inches in diameter, was the only black and the only woman among the reporters. Soldiers kept the crowd behind ropes at the edge of the street. Suddenly a military police officer stepped forward and grabbed Dunnigan, yelling: "Get back there behind those ropes!" Dunnigan, refusing to comply with the order, walked forward. The soldier grabbed her shoulder and shoved her toward the edge of the street. Again she continued to walk forward. Only when a male reporter came to Dunnigan's rescue did the officer back away. Dunnigan wrote a story about the incident. The story stated:

Later, during the trip, President Truman, himself, came to her (Dunnigan's) compartment and asked how she was being treated on the trip. When she said everything was all right, he smiled, 179 shook her hand and said, "That's good."(67)

Dunnigan's newspaper stories published in the late 1940s and the 1950s also suggest that she may have helped create a racial consciousness and pride among African-Americans across the

country. She was particularly well positioned to build this national sense of community because she wrote for a national news service. Her stories appeared in black newspapers throughout the country; most reporters working for the black press wrote stories that appeared only in one city. In addition, because she was the correspondent for the Associated Negro Press in the nation's capital, her stories were likely to be of interest to all of ANP's more than 100 newspapers. Her position in being able to help create a sense of solidarity among black Americans, therefore, was unique.

Dunnigan's most significant method for building this sense of unity was by trumpeting news about the progress that black Americans were making toward achieving an integrated society. Dunnigan's articles about the triumphs of residents of one city provided encouragement for African-Americans who were struggling against similar obstacles in other cities. In 1949, for example, Dunnigan reported that a New York delegation to the Truman inauguration had successfully integrated a Washington hotel. Dunnigan reported: "Civil rights got a preliminary start in the Truman administration with defeat of jim crow by the New York delegation at the Roosevelt hotel here. . . ." (68) Dunnigan's story ran in black newspapers from Ohio to Texas, (69) but mainstream daily newspapers in Washington did not report the event. (70) Other indications of progress toward racial equality which Dunnigan reported included the successful integration of a Washington restaurant, (71) the swimming pool at a Washington hotel, (72) and the National Press Club. (73)

Dunnigan also sought out and reported other indications that

the status of African-Americans was improving, often attempting to highlight trends that extended beyond one city or state. Such stories frequently carried a tone of boosterism that made Dunnigan seem more like a cheerleader than a reporter. At the beginning of 1950, for example, Dunnigan wrote a round-up story summarizing various ways in which the civil rights of black Americans had been protected or extended during the previous year. She wrote:

There was not only improved organization and unity (among) movements concerned with the fight for equality, but the courts decided some favorable victories, and public officials manifested an increasing awareness of their obligations to protect and enlarge the civil rights of all (sic) groups. . . .(74)

Dunnigan reported that the states had enacted more civil rights laws in 1949 than in any previous year, and she made a state-by-state assessment of progress in civil rights legislation.

Other Dunnigan stories emphasizing advancements within the nation's black population focused on a trend toward less racial prejudice in the Catholic Church,(75) the 100th anniversary of black colleges in the United States,(76) and a rise in black ownership of banks.(77)

Dunnigan also helped instill a sense of pride in African-Americans by recording a long list of honors and "firsts" by individuals of their race. In her autobiography, Dunnigan said she took special pride each time she wrote about the first

African-American securing a particular job on Capitol Hill. Her stories spotlighted the first elevator operator, police officer, chef, and doorman.(78)

Dunnigan credited her own newspaper stories as playing a role in bringing about one of these achievements. In her autobiography, Dunnigan said she "constantly needled" the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor to appoint a black woman to its staff.(79) When the appointment was made, Dunnigan's story included this background: "For a number of years Negro organizations have tried to place some Negro employes (sic) in this lily-white division of the labor department, but their efforts were continually defeated." (80) Similar "first" stories included two that Dunnigan wrote during the Truman trip--one about the first black mayor of Boys' Town(81) and a full-page feature article about the black crew members on the presidential train.(82) Another full-page feature article profiled black Americans working in the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.(83)

Dunnigan also spotlighted the achievements of individuals by writing stories about African-Americans who overcame physical handicaps. One example described a black woman who was exposed to freezing temperatures for so long that both of her arms and legs had to be amputated, and yet she was working successfully as a seamstress.(84) A similar story told of a blind and deaf man who started his own auto repair business.(85)

Dunnigan also wrote profiles and feature articles that focused on black celebrities, providing the African-American community with role models. In coverage of the Truman inaugural

ball, for example, Dunnigan included a three-paragraph anecdote about the President inviting Mary McLeod Bethune, a revered black educator, to join him in the presidential box. Dunnigan wrote:

When this gracious lady attempted to ascend the stairs, she was halted by the secret service who told her that she could not enter the balcony. The President soon got word to them to permit Mrs. Bethune through to his box.

There the President greeted her with a friendly handshake and expressed his delight at seeing so many members of her race among the guests attending the President's Inaugural Ball.(86)

Other celebrities who were subjects of Dunnigan stories included singers Billie Holiday,(87) Nancy Wilson,(88) Lena Horne,(89) and Ertha Kitt,(90) actors Bill Cosby and Sidney Poitier,(91) and athletes Joe Louis(92) and Jackie Robinson.(93)

Such stories clearly served to enhance the self-esteem, pride, and confidence of black readers throughout the country. It would be difficult to overestimate the role that such coverage--when sustained on a daily basis for more than a decade--played in helping to mold the country's African-American citizens into a cohesive community demanding its full rights.

Consistent with previous scholarship relevant to both the African-American press during the late 1940s and the 1950s and the work of women in American journalism, Alice Allison 183
Dunnigan's published newspaper writing supports the observation

that certain characteristics are common to individuals practicing these two genres of American journalism. Most notably, Dunnigan's writing demonstrates that she was an advocate for protest and reform regarding racial discrimination. In addition, an analysis of Dunnigan's stories shows that her writing possessed an emotional intensity not generally found in newspaper reporting and that she drew upon her own life experiences in much of her coverage of issues and news events. And, finally, Dunnigan's published work offers examples of how she may have helped raise the racial consciousness of this country's black population and, thereby, helped to galvanize African-Americans into a national force fully prepared to demand the changes that eventually were brought about through the modern civil rights movement.

At the same time, neither Dunnigan nor her accomplishments should be glorified. She was a poor black woman from the rural South who proved that many obstacles can be overcome if an individual builds on her or his innate strengths through the marshaling of determination, courage, and spirit. Despite the many obstacles facing her, Dunnigan made important contributions to the evolution of her race, her gender, her profession, and her country. For example, she forced the highest officials of this nation to acknowledge that black Americans were not second-class citizens who should be satisfied with second-hand news. She recorded many of the injustices committed against her people, providing details about them for African-American readers throughout the country. But she was not a power figure in American journalism or American government, and it should not be

suggested that she alone brought about revolutionary changes in the attitude toward or treatment of African-Americans.

To place Dunnigan's contributions in proper perspective, there must be more research on the experiences and accomplishments of African-American women journalists who worked during the 1940s and 1950s. (94) One individual whose life and work should be examined is Ethel L. Payne, the Chicago Defender reporter who joined Dunnigan in Washington in 1953, becoming the second black woman reporter covering national issues in the capital. During her twenty years as a Washington reporter, Payne covered the major events in the modern civil rights movement and became the first African-American reporter--male or female--to focus on international news coverage. Other individuals worthy of study include Charlotta A. Bass, publisher and editor of the California Eagle and the Progressive Party candidate for vice president of the United States in 1952; Daisy Bates, the publisher of the Arkansas State Press who led the integration of Little Rock Central High School in 1957; Lucile Bluford, editor and publisher of the Kansas City Call from the 1940s through the present; Marvel Cooke, reporter for the New York Amsterdam News and managing editor of The Crisis in the 1940s and 1950s; and Hazel Garland, who began writing for the Pittsburgh Courier in 1946 and eventually advanced to the position of city editor.

Also of benefit would be a detailed analysis of why the writing of African-American journalists and American women journalists share common characteristics. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to undertake such an analysis, one possible explanation comes immediately to mind: African-Americans

and American women share a common heritage of prejudice and discrimination. Throughout most of the history of this country, white men have treated blacks and women unjustly and have placed severe social and economic limitations upon them. It seems logical to suggest that such common treatment may have propelled the two groups to respond in similar ways. For example, one reasonable way for oppressed individuals to attempt to change their status is through emotional appeals to a mass audience of newspaper readers. Such a suggestion is mere speculation, however, and more thoughtful analysis and discussion would be required to determine if such a cause-and-effect relationship may, in fact, exist. Such additional scholarship might very well be worthwhile. In addition to increasing the understanding of the history of African-American journalists and American women journalists, research in this area also might produce significant insights into the behavior of other areas of minority journalism and advocacy journalism.

Only through a commitment to further scholarship relevant to African-American women journalists and the motivating forces of both the black press and American women journalists will students of history gain a full understanding of and appreciation for the contributions that Alice Allison Dunnigan and others of her race and gender made to the changes in the treatment of black Americans that occurred in the twentieth century. The preliminary findings, as described in this paper, clearly demonstrate that such an examination is merited.

1 Freedom's Journal was founded by John B. Russwurm and Samuel Cornish in New York City on March 16, 1827. Histories of Freedom's Journal include Lionel C. Barrow Jr., "'Our Own Cause: 'Freedom's Journal' and the Beginning of the Black Press," Journalism History 4 (Winter 1977-78), pp. 119-122; and Kenneth D. Nordin, "In Search of Black Unity: An Interpretation of the Content and Function of 'Freedom's Journal,'" Journalism History 4 (Winter 1977-78), pp. 123-28. The most complete history of the black press in this country is Roland E. Wolseley, The Black Press, U.S.A. (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1971). Other important sources for information on the black press are Armistead Scott Pride, "Negro Newspapers: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," Journalism Quarterly 28 (Spring 1951), pp. 179-88, and Henry Lewis Suggs, ed., The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983).

2 See, for example, Thomas W. Young essay, "Voice of Protest, Prophet of Change," in Race and the News Media, Paul L. Fisher and Ralph L. Lowenstein, eds., (New York: Praeger Publishing Co., 1967), pp. 126-28; Wolseley, p. 19.

3 Maxwell R. Brooks, The Negro Press Re-Examined (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1959), p. 101.

4 Thomas W. Young in Race and the News Media, p. 125.

5 See, for example, Brooks, p. 98; Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, The Press and America: An Interpretive History of the Mass Media, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1984), pp. 632-35; Robert Finkelstein in Race and the News Media, p. 123; Alton Hornsby, Jr., in The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979, p. 129; Henry La Brie III, "Black Newspapers: The Roots are 150 Years Deep," Journalism History 4 (Winter 1977-78), p. 112; Henry Lee Moon, "Beyond Objectivity: The 'Fighting' Press," in Race and the News Media, pp. 135, 139; Charlotte G. O'Kelly, "The Black Press: Conservative or Radical, Reformist or Revolutionary?," Journalism History 4 (Winter 1977-78), p. 114; Howard L. Seemann, "Keeping the Gates at the Chicago Defender," Journalism Quarterly 48 (Summer 1971), p. 277.

6 Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disobedience (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), p. 363.

7 Emery and Emery, p. 306.

8 Historians generally have devoted little attention to the contributions of black women journalists. Only one African-American woman is mentioned in the standard history of American journalism, Emery and Emery, p. 307. That woman is Ida B. Wells-Barnett, who died in 1931; she was described in a single paragraph.

9 Moon, p. 136. See also, Alan Bussel essay, "Evolution and Revolution: The Search for New Forms," in Perspectives of the Black Press: 1974, Henry G. La Brie III, ed., (Kennebunkport, Maine: Mercer House Press, 1974), p. 142; Richard T. Davis, ed., Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 87-88; 96-97; Woody Klein essay, "The New Revolution: A Postscript," in Race and the News Media, pp. 144, 153; La Brie, "Black Newspapers: The Roots are 150 Years Deep," p. 113; Henry G. La Brie III and William J. Zima, "Directional Quandries of the Black Press in the United States," Journalism Quarterly 48 (Winter 1971), pp. 640, 643; Sharon Murphy, Other Voices: Black, Chicano, and American Indian Press (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum/Standard, 1974), pp. 80, 83; O'Kelly, p. 114; L.F. Palmer, Jr., "The Black Press in Transition," Columbia Journalism Review, Spring 1970, pp. 33-34; Pride, "Negro Newspapers: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," pp. 181, 186-87; Armistead Scott Pride, "The Negro Newspaper in the United States," Gazette 2 (1956), pp. 141-49; John D. Stevens essay, "World War II and The Black Press," in Perspectives of the Black Press: 1974, p. 36; Oswald Garrison Villard, The Disappearing Daily, (New York: Knopf, 1944), pp. 24-25; Wolseley, pp. 55, 56, 67, 71, 92, 165, 169, 306; Thomas W. Young, p. 130.

10 Wolseley, p. 169. See also, Simeon Booker, Black Man's America (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp. 252-53; Brooks, p. 62; Bussel, p. 146; Davis, pp. 32-33; Finkelstein, p. 123; La Brie and Zima, p. 640; Murphy, p. 82; Gunner Mydral, An American Dilemma (New York: Harper & Bros., 1944), p. 917; Kenneth D. Nordin, "In Search of Black Unity: An Interpretation of the Content and Function of 'Freedom's Journal,'" Journalism History 4 (Winter 1977-78), p. 126; O'Kelly, p. 114; T. Ella Strother, "The Black Image in the Chicago 'Defender,' 1905-1975," Journalism History 4 (Winter 1977-78), pp. 139-40; Wolseley, p. 71; Young, p. 127.

11 Wolseley, p. 166. See also, Booker, pp. 252-53; Brooks, p. 62; Bussel, pp. 148-49; Finkelstein, p. 124; La Brie and Zima, p. 643; Murphy, pp. 81-82; Pride, "Negro Newspapers: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," p. 186; Seemann, pp. 276-78; Strother, pp. 138-39; Wolseley, pp. 167, 329.

12 Jerrell H. Shofner in The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979, p. 113. See also, Booker, pp. 252-53; Brooks, p. 64; Bussell, pp. 144, 150; Editor & Publisher 101, 29 June 1968, p. 19; G. James Fleming essay, "The Afro-American--One of Many," in Perspectives of the Black Press: 1974, p. 75; Phyl Garland essay, "Staying with The Black Press: Problems and Rewards," in Perspectives of the Black Press: 1974, pp. 167, 178; Allen Woodrow Jones in The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979, pp. 44-46; Klein, p. 154; La Brie, p. 112; La Brie and Zima, pp. 642-43; Moon, p. 135; Murphy, pp. 81-83; Nordin, pp. 126, 128; O'Kelly, pp. 115-16; Palmer, p. 33; P.L. Prattis essay, "Days Of The Courier Past . . .," in Perspectives of the Black Press: 1974, p. 67; Strother, pp. 140-41; Villard, pp. 24-25; Wolseley, pp. 165-67; Consuelo C. Young, "A Study of Reader Attitudes Toward the Negro Press," Journalism Quarterly 21 (June 1944), p. 152; Thomas W. Young, pp. 127-28.

13 Marion Marzolf, Up from the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists (New York: Hastings House, 1977).

14 Ibid., p. 11.

15 Ibid., pp. 13-14.

16 Ibid., pp. 14-15.

17 Marzolf, pp. 37, 44, 81, 86, 90. See also, Maurine Beasley and Sheila Silver, Women in Media: A Documentary Source Book (Washington, D.C.: Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 1977), pp. 8, 15, 29, 38, 47, 54-62, 63; Jean E. Collins, She Was There: Stories of Pioneering Women Journalists (New York: Julian Messner, 1980), pp. 110-11, 141, 161; Kay Mills, A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Page (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1988), pp. 19, 24, 30, 31.

18 Ishbel Ross, Ladies of the Press (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936).

19 Ross, p. 4. See also, Collins, pp. 52, 67, 119; Ralph Martin, Cissy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p. 338; Marzolf, pp. 32, 34, 35, 37; Mills, pp. 27, 70, 74, 183. It was women journalists' success at appealing to the emotions that led to the "sob sisters." These women, the most famous of whom was Winifred Black Bonfils (Annie Laurie), were granted front-row seats at trials in order that they could spot the "tear-filled eye," "quivering lip," "lump in the throat," and "trembling hand."

20 Mills, p. 27. Specific examples of women becoming closely involved with or participating in stories include Fuller visiting prisons when covering conditions there (Marzolf, p. 14), and Eleanor "Cissy" Patterson, despite her wealth and social status, living in poverty to expose the living conditions of the Bonus Army of veterans camping in Washington (Mills, p. 19.). Other women whose careers included bringing their life experiences into their stories include Marvel Cooke (Mills, pp. 176-9.), Bess Furman (Mills, pp. 42-43.), Beth Campbell Short (Mills, pp. 35-41.), Elizabeth May Craig (Maurine H. Beasley, Eleanor Roosevelt and the Media: A Public Quest for Self-Fulfillment (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1987), pp. 39, 46.), and Genevieve Forbes Herrick (Beasley, p. 46.). "Stunt girls" were valued for writing stories about how women were treated by police officers and hospital workers (Marzolf, pp. 23, 32-33, 34; Ross, p. 14.). Elisabeth Cochrane (Nelly Bly) exposed the mistreatment of mental patients, women prisoners, victims of traffic accidents, and women working in factories and department stores (Beasley and Silver, pp. 47-48.).

21 Beasley, p. 38.

22 See also, Beasley, pp. 38-50; Maurine Beasley, "The Women's National Press Club: Case Study of Professional Aspirations," Journalism History 15 (Winter 1988), pp. 112-14; Beasley and Silver, pp. 24-27; Marzolf, pp. 32-34, 44; Mills, p. 65.

23 The Standing Committee of Correspondents determined who received credentials to use the facilities of the United States Senate Press Gallery and United States House of Representatives Press Gallery. The committee approved Dunnigan's application on June 17, 1947. Louis Lautier had integrated the press galleries on March 18, 1947. The minutes of Standing Committee meetings are available in the Senate Press Gallery in the United States Capitol Building.

24 Several black magazines and newspapers recorded Dunnigan's breakthroughs soon after she achieved them. See, for example, Pulse magazine, "Alice A. Dunnigan," November 1947, pp. 18-19; Louisville Leader, "Admit Woman to Press Galleries," 5 July 1947, Claude A. Barnett Papers, Chicago Historical Society; Opportunity magazine, "White House Reporter," Spring 1948, p. 52; Our World magazine, "Washington Reporter," February 1947, p. 18. Other publications that described Dunnigan's early achievements in articles that were published near the end of her career include J. William Snodgrass, "Black Women and Journalism: 1800-1950," Western Journal of Black Studies 6 (Fall 1982), p. 156; Russellville (Kentucky) News-Democrat, "A Teenager Who Didn't Drop Out Despite Hardship," 19 March 1964, p. 2; Washington Press, "Prominent Newspaper Woman Appointed To High Political Post," 30 June 1961, p. 1.

25 In 1961, President John F. Kennedy appointed Dunnigan to the staff of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, and, in 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed her to the staff of the President's Council on Youth Opportunity. In the 1970s, Dunnigan retired from the federal government and published her autobiography and a history of black Kentuckians. She also continued to work parttime as a newspaper columnist until her death in 1983.

26 Claude A. Barnett, a reporter for the Chicago Defender, founded the national news service in 1919. At its peak in the 1940s, ANP served 112 newspapers that accounted for ninety percent of the circulation of the country's black newspapers. Members paid a monthly fee and provided the service with news from their cities. ANP, which was based in Chicago, opened its Washington office during World War II and maintained that office until the news service ceased operation in 1964. Two histories of ANP are Lawrence Hogan, A Black National News Service: The Associated Negro Press and Claude Barnett, 1919-1945 (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1984) and Richard Beard and Cyril Zoerner, "The Associated Negro Press: Its Founding, Ascendancy, and Demise," Journalism Quarterly 46 (Spring 1969), pp. 47-52. See also letter written by Frank Marshall Davis, executive editor of ANP, to William Theis, secretary of the Standing Committee of Correspondents, 2 April 1947, Claude A. Barnett Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

27 The primary source of information for this paper is the Alice Allison Dunnigan Papers held in the Moorland-Spinqarn Research Center at Howard University. The papers comprise twenty boxes of materials Dunnigan deposited at the center in 1977. Of particular importance for this paper are the clippings of Dunnigan's newspaper articles. These clippings are important because most of the newspapers for which Dunnigan wrote have not been preserved. Only five ANP newspapers are available for the 1940s and 1950s at the Library of Congress--the Atlanta Daily World, Baltimore Afro-American, Norfolk Journal and Guide, Philadelphia Tribune, and Washington Afro-American; only two ANP newspapers are available for the period through the Black Press Archives at Howard University--the Pittsburgh Courier and Washington Afro-American. Because the other papers for which Dunnigan wrote have not been preserved, many of her stories are available only through the clippings in the Alice Allison Dunnigan Papers.

28 Alice A. Dunnigan, A Black Woman's Experience: From Schoolhouse to White House (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Company, 1974), p. ii.

29 Jacqueline Trescott, The Washington Post, "The Black Press: New Archive for An Embattled, Battling Institution," 18 March 1977, p. 1.

30 Alice A. Dunnigan, "'You're a Black Son-of-a-Bitch' Shouts Georgia Congressman," Oklahoma City Black Dispatch, 12 August 1950, p. 1; Alice A. Dunnigan, "Policemen Restrain Profane Lawmaker," Houston Informer, 12 August 1950, p. 1.

31 Neither the Washington Post nor Washington Evening Star mentioned the event in their August 11, 12, or 13 editions. The incident took place August 11.

32 Alice A. Dunnigan, "'I'd Do It Again,' Says Fiery Ga. Congressman in Discussing Attack on Patterson," Oklahoma City Black Dispatch, 19 August 1950, p. 1.

33 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Congress Nears End Without Laws To Aid Average Americans," Atlanta Daily World, 2 June 1948, p. 1.

34 The lead story on the front page of the Washington Evening Star on that day, for example, was "\$10-Billion Military Budget Asked After Bradley and Denfeld Warn Of 'Menace From Soviet Might,'" 3 June 1948, p. 1.

35 Dunnigan, "Congress Nears End Without Laws To Aid Average American."

36 The three congressional stories on the Post's front page were: "Action on Draft Wins Priority Over All Measures But One," "5000 Expected Here Today To Oppose Mundt-Nixon Bill," and "GOP Leaders Plan June 19 Adjournment." The four congressional stories on the Star's front page were: "\$10-Billion Military Budget Asked After Bradley and Denfeld Warn Of 'Menace From Soviet Might,'" "11,500 New Jobs in Air Force Voted; Army, Navy Hiring Hit," "Thousands of Mundt Bill Foes Invade D.C. for Protest March," and "Joint Unit Votes Tax on D.C. Sales and Big Incomes."

37 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Find Long-Lost DC Anti-Bias Law," New York Amsterdam News, 28 May 1949, p. 6.

38 See, for example, "EAT ANYWHERE," Atlanta Daily World, 9 June 1953, p. 1.

39 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Veterans Put Out Six-Foot Burning Cross in NE Area," Washington Afro-American, 3 April 1948, p. 1.

40 No coverage of the incident appeared in the Post or Star between March 24 and April 10, 1948, the two weeks before and after Dunnigan's story was published.

41 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Covenanters Seek to Evict Family," Washington Afro-American, 3 April 1948, p. 2.

42 No coverage of the incident appeared in the Post or Star between March 24 and April 10, 1948, the two weeks before and after Dunnigan's story was published.

43 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Mrs. Ingram Receives Guests," Washington Afro-American, 23 April 1949, p. 2.

44 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Martinsville Seven Ask Parents To Keep Praying," Atlanta Daily World, 16 July 1950, p. 1.

45 While working fulltime as a reporter, Dunnigan worked for the political campaigns of several Democratic candidates, including Averell Harriman, Hubert Humphrey, Lyndon B. Johnson, and John F. Kennedy.

46 Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954 (Washington, D.C.: Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1960), pp. 92-93.

47 Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

48 See, for example, Murray Kempton, "The Label We Bear," New York Post, 19 April 1957, p. M4; Labor's Daily, "Negro Reporters Protest Snubs at Ike Conferences," 21 May 1957, p. 10.

49 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Woman Reporter Declares Partiality Is Shown at White House Press Conferences," Oklahoma City Black Dispatch, 17 May 1957, p. 1. See also, Alice A. Dunnigan, "Writer Says President Eisenhower Ignores Negro Reporters at Confab," St. Louis Argus, 26 April 1957. It is not known on what page the St. Louis Argus published the article "Writer Says President Eisenhower Ignores Negro Reporters at Confab." When Dunnigan clipped her articles from the newspapers in which they were published and, eventually, placed them among the Alice Allison Dunnigan Papers, she did not always cite the page on which an article was published, the date on which it was published, or the publication in which it appeared. Originals of most of her clipped articles were found in the five Associated Negro Press newspapers preserved at the Library of Congress or the two newspapers preserved in the Black Press Archives at Howard University, but this one was not. The only source for this article, then, is the Alice Allison Dunnigan Papers. With this article, as with others articles cited in this paper, the specific box among the Alice Allison Dunnigan Papers that contains the article will be cited. This story is in Box 16.

50 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Why Is Ike Silent On The South," Philadelphia Independent, 23 February 1957, p. 2.

51 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Nation's Leaders of Both Races Urge Eisenhower to Take Firm Stand On Domestic Issues," Oklahoma City Black Dispatch, 18 March 1960, p. 7.

52 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Ike Typically Evasive on Sit-Downs, But NAACP Launches Boycott on Jim Crow Chains," Oklahoma City Black Dispatch, 25 March 1960, Box 16.

53 Letter written by Alice A. Dunnigan to Claude A. Barnett, 21 November 1947, Claude A. Barnett Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

54 Dunnigan, A Black Woman's Experience, pp. 16-21.

55 Our World magazine, "Washington Reporter," February 1949, p. 18.

56 ANP's expenses exceeded subscription revenue for every mailing distributed during the news service's forty-five-year history, with a single mailing sometimes costing ANP as much as \$3,000 more than subscribers paid. Fiscal problems finally forced ANP to cease operation in 1964. For a full discussion of ANP finances, see Beard and Zoerner, p. 49; Hogan, pp. 234-35.

57 Dunnigan's reporter salary in 1947 was \$1,200 a year, while the average salary for Washington black women was \$1,395. Census of Population: 1950, Volume II: Characteristics of the Population (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 9-101.

58 Undated letter written by Alice A. Dunnigan to Claude A. Barnett, Claude A. Barnett Papers, Chicago Historical Society. The letter's contents identify it as having been written during the fall of 1947.

59 Dunnigan described her first marriage in an interview conducted with her on April 8, 1977, as part of the Black Women Oral History Project of the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College, pp. 12-15. The interview was conducted by Marcia Greenlee and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. A copy of the interview is available in the Washingtoniana Collection at Martin Luther King Junior Memorial Library in Washington, D.C.

60 A Black Woman's Experience, p. 161.

61 Black Women Oral History Project, pp. 12, 18; Dunnigan, A Black Woman's Experience, p. 182.

62 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Ingram Family's Fund Needs Woman Counsel," Atlanta Daily World, May 4, 1949, p. 2.

63 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Prospective Funerals of Va. Youths Show Sins Of Omission," Atlanta Daily World, 25 July 1950, p. 2.

64 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Delegation to Visit Ingram Family Brings on 'Battle of Sexes' . . .," Fort Worth Defender, 28 April 1949, p. 2.

65 Alice A. Dunnigan, "July 4 Came But Parents Of Martinsville 7 Knew No Joy," Washington Afro-American, 9 July 1950, p. 1.

66 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Good Will Shown on Truman Tour," Baltimore Afro-American, 3 July 1948, p. 5.

67 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Prejudiced MP Given Reprimand for Bias," Washington Afro-American, 19 June 1948, p. 3.

68 Alice A. Dunnigan, "N.Y. Delegation Causes Washington Hotel To Breakdown Policy," Ohio Daily Express, 26 January 1949, p. 1.

69 Alice A. Dunnigan, "N.Y. Delegation Causes D.C. Hotel To Break Down 'No Negro' Policy," Houston Informer, 29 January 1949, p. 3.

70 No coverage of the incident appeared in the Post or Star between January 22 and February 5, 1949, the two weeks before and after Dunnigan's story was published.

71 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Child's Cafe Serves 200 in Mixed Group," Washington Afro-American, 14 August 1950, p. 3.

72 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Alphas Break Down Color Barrier In Nation's Capitol (sic)," Box 16.

73 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Covering Washington," Atlanta Daily World, 17 February 1955, p. 6.

74 Alice A. Dunnigan, "1949 Saw Negroes Make Definite Advancement," Ohio Daily Express, p. 2, Box 6.

75 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Catholics Losing Prejudice, Gaining Negro Members," Houston Informer, 25 March 1950, Box 16.

76 Alice A. Dunnigan, "100th Anniversary Of Higher Education For Negroes In U.S.," Houston Informer, 7 May 1949, p. 2.

77 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Negroes Now Own 14 Banks," Pittsburgh Courier, 30 October 1948, p. 27.

78 Dunnigan, A Black Woman's Experience, pp. 317-18.

79 Ibid., p. 318.

80 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Laura Kirkland, First Negro Woman in Labor Department," Columbia Lighthouse and Informer, 9 November 1947, Box 15.

81 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Boys' Town Mayor Presents Truman Gifts," Atlanta Daily World, 9 June 1948, p. 1.

82 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Behind the Scenes on the President's Special," Washington Afro-American, 9 October 1948, p. 10.

83 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Health, Education and Welfare," Washington Afro-American, 31 December 1955, p. 11.

84 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Determined To Succeed--in Spite of Handicaps," Service magazine, April 1949, Box 16.

85 Alice A. Dunnigan, "A Twice-Challenged Champion," Employment Security Review magazine, May 1949, Box 16.

86 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Inaugural Ball Sets Enchanted Fairyland Scene," Atlanta Daily World, 29 January 1949, Box 16.

87 Alice A. Dunnigan, "A Day in the Life of Lady Day; 'Twas Her Birthday," Baltimore Afro-American, 23 April 1948, p. 6.

88 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Performers Will 'Do Their Thing' For Civil Rights," New Observer, 22 June 1968, p. 2.

89 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Lena Horne Angered When Film Aid Ignores Newsmen," Philadelphia Independent, 29 January 1949, p. 4.

90 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Ertha Kitt Stars At Israel Party," Box 16.

91 Dunnigan, "Performers Will 'Do Their Thing' For Civil Rights," p. 2.

92 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Veterans' Rally Told Louis Is With Robeson," Washington Afro-American, 3 July 1948, p. 5.

93 Alice A. Dunnigan, "Retired Baseball Great Goes To Bat For Teams," Raleigh Carolinian, 9 August 1958, p. 15.

94 For more than a decade, historians studying the experiences of American women journalists have called for more research on the lives and contributions of black women journalists. See, for example, Beasley and Silver, p. viii; Mills, p. 176.

A "Hitler Myth?":
American Popular Periodicals and Adolf Hitler 1933-1938

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the attitude toward Adolf Hitler found in twelve popular periodicals between 1933-1938. An examination of public opinion and Adolf Hitler in the pre-war period reveals that gauging attitudes was quite difficult since many of the major, national media sources intentionally stayed away from controversial subjects. Thus, newsreels, films, and the radio were not deemed sufficient in attempting to understand American opinion of the German chancellor.

An examination of the popular periodical press, the best source of opinion about Hitler in the pre-war period, yielded surprising results. First, the paper shows that Hitler was not regarded differently from other dictatorships which had emerged in Germany in the past. The articles surveyed also demonstrate wide interest in Hitler's proclaimed pacifism or possible war aims yet they do not present a clear picture of whether he should be trusted or not. Finally, the study reveals an inordinate interest in Hitler's private life and shows that often he was portrayed quite sympathetically by the journalists.

Finally, the paper addresses the questions of the existence of a "Hitler myth" in the United States. The study concludes that indeed such a myth was fostered either through ignorance of Hitler's aims, disbelief at the actions he took or misinformation about Hitler's role in directing the actions of the Third Reich. This myth, while not translating into pro-Nazism, did help to foster isolationism in America.

A "Hitler Myth?":
American Popular Periodicals and Adolf Hitler 1933-1938

In 1940, popular silent movie star Charles Chaplin decided to enter the modern film market with his first talking release, The Great Dictator. It was indeed ironic that the man who made the much-adored character of "the little tramp" popular chose to capitalize in this film on the striking physical similarity between himself and Adolf Hitler. A spoof of dictator "Adenoid Henkel's" attempts to rule the world, Chaplin filled his film with pointed allegory about the nature of dictatorship in Europe in the 1930s. In one scene his Minister of Propaganda "Herr Garbage" informs Henkel that he must "kill the Jews and wipe out the brunettes" in order to achieve a pure Aryan race, an obvious reference to Germany's repressive racial policies. Toward the end of the film, the viewer witnesses a deluded and insane Henkel contemplating his future as dictator of the world while bouncing a balloon globe in the air in a frenzy of emotion. The globe bursts and with it, the film suggests, all of the dictators' dreams.

The Great Dictator was released after the war in Europe erupted. It was certainly the first film in which Chaplin sought to influence directly his viewers opinions and not merely to entertain. Beneath the satire and burlesque humor there was the seriousness of

the Nazi regime and the threat it posed to western civilization. As with most of Chaplin's previous endeavors, The Great Dictator was a success in the United States and abroad. In fact, while the motion picture was banned in Nazi Germany, a copy was smuggled in for Hitler's private use and he reportedly viewed it three times.¹

Despite its satirical nature, The Great Dictator was in many respects an important vehicle to influence public opinion about Adolf Hitler in the pre-war period. The thinly veiled condemnation of Nazi Germany was certainly not lost on the moviegoers. More significantly, however, the bulk of the responsibility for Germany's actions seemed to be laid right at the feet of Hitler himself providing a very potent message to an American public still supportive of isolationism. Indeed, Chaplin was one of the very few filmmakers willing to tackle such a controversial issue and risk the possibility of upsetting the complacent public.²

Because of the success of Chaplin's endeavor, his view of Adolf Hitler was circulated nation-wide. His film added to the scores of print material, newsreels, and radio broadcasts which had covered events in Germany closely since the beginning of Hitler's chancellorship in 1933. Indeed, there was no lack of coverage of issues concerning German-American relations in the pre-war period.

¹The Great Dictator is copyrighted 1940 and was released by the Charles Chaplin Film Corporation. As with many of his other films, the co-star was Paulette Goddard.

²For a view of the film industries reluctance to tackle controversial subjects see Frederick Lewis Allen, Since Yesterday: The Nineteen-Thirties in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1940).

Narrative accounts in the national press covered events in Germany as well as those events effecting German-American relations. Concern about the number of fascist groups in America even prompted Congress to investigate Nazi propaganda activities in the United States in 1934. Finally, outrage at the persecution of Jews in Germany also made a large impact on the American press and public opinion especially after 1938.*

Historians have also covered German-American relations in great depth since the end of World War II. The capture of German official documents created the opportunity for in-depth research into the formation of German policy and attempts at propaganda in America. The Official German Report compiled by O. John Rogge, for example, explores through official government documents, attempts at Nazi penetration in the United States in the 1930s particularly the role of organizations like the German American Bund. The Nazi Movement in the United States 1924-1941 by Sander A. Diamond provided an even broader treatment of Nazism in America emphasizing the activities and rise to popularity of Fritz Kuhn, the self-styled American fuhrer, in the late 1930s. Finally, a recent publication

*For a further examination of Congressional concern about Nazi propaganda in the United States see Arnold Offner, American Appeasement: Foreign Policy and Germany 1933-1938 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1969). For an excellent survey of diplomatic relations in the period, especially German views of America see James Compton, The Swastika and the Eagle: Hitler, the United States and the Origins of World War II (New York: Houghton. Mifflin, Co. 1967). Finally, for an examination of the American press and the persecution of Jews in Germany see Deborah E. Lipstadt, Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust (New York: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1986); David S. Wyman, Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968).

by Robert E. Herzstein examines both fascism in America along with American and German reactions toward each other in the 1930s.*

This short historiographic survey reveals that there is no lack of interest in Nazi Germany and the United States in the 1930s. Yet, an examination of the material published reveals that little research exists concerning the public's perception of Nazi Germany and more particularly of Adolf Hitler. Recent scholarly attention to the existence of a "Hitler Myth" in Germany has drawn historians once again to look at the role of Hitler himself in the ideological evolution of the Third Reich. It would seem fruitful to expand this notion of a "Hitler Myth" by examining public perceptions of Adolf Hitler in the United States before the outbreak of war in 1939. Apart from the actions of the Nazi Party itself was Adolf Hitler personally seen as a threat in the 1930s? Did public perceptions of Hitler help to legitimize the Nazi regime in the United States? How did views of Hitler change with the evolution of international events? What were the crucial turning points in public attitudes? Finally, how might the public's perception of Adolf Hitler translate into its attitude toward American foreign policy?

Assessing national public opinion in the 1930s is, admittedly, a difficult proposition. This decade, which saw the full-fledged evolution of talking movies, newsreels, the radio and

*O John Rogge, The Official German Report: Nazi Penetration 1924-1942 (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961); Sander A. Diamond, The Nazi Movement in the United States 1924-1941 (London: Cornell University Press, 1974); and Robert Edwin Herzstein, Roosevelt and Hitler: Prelude to War (New York: Paragon House, 1989). See also Alton Frye, Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere (London: Yale University Press, 1967).

an ever-widening press lacked no vehicle for influencing public opinion. Yet assessing most of these sources in terms of their contribution in shaping American public opinion of Hitler is nearly impossible. As Frederick Lewis Allen pointed out as early as 1940, the radio, which perhaps had the greatest ability to shape the public, was conservative about displaying personal opinions, though it did transmit the news very effectively. The radio networks seemed to be committed to providing mostly non-controversial variety shows and serials in which "nothing more distressing happened than that Edgar Bergen grew bald," and presented a rosy portrait of "a world in which there were no unemployed men, no budget deficits, no marching dictators."^{*}

Movies and newsreels suffered the same fate. As shown earlier, Charles Chaplin was quite revolutionary in making a film with such a pointed message. The Great Depression of the 1930s led most movie studios to concentrate on large budget films which intentionally masked reality. Again, Frederick Lewis Allen maintains correctly that "if a dozen or two feature pictures, selected at random, were to be shown to an audience of 1960, that audience would probably derive from them not the faintest idea of the ordeal through which the United States went in the 1930s."^{*}

Certainly the greatest source of information and influence on public opinion should have been the newsreel, an innovation of the 1930s which brought news making events to small town theaters

^{*}Allen, p. 276.

^{*}Ibid., p. 277.

across America. Yet, again, there was a purposeful evasion of controversial issues. The Fox corporation in 1931 specifically stated that newsreels could not show scenes of a "controversial nature...on which reaction might be divided." Furthermore there was a particularly strong conspiracy of silence concerning coverage of Germany. Fearful of giving Hitler a platform to influence the American public, one newsreel company committed itself to omitting all news from Germany "unless it was a revolution against the Hitler regime." As historian Raymond Fielding rightly notes, this noble gesture had the effect of merely cloaking the Nazi regime and Hitler in darkness, preventing the American public from forming opinions in the years in which so many important events occurred.'

Even the "March of Time" newsreel series begun in 1935 which did occasionally cover mildly controversial topics only featured events in Germany in four of its issues between 1935 and 1938. It should be given credit, however, for breaking out of the movie industry's long taboo against controversy in 1938 with the release of a shocking portrait of the Third Reich entitled "Inside Nazi Germany--1938" By that year, many Americans were becoming aroused at events occurring in Europe.*

Thus, it was difficult for the American public to receive a truly national view of Hitler or even of events in Nazi Germany in the 1930s. The most successful medium for penetrating this wall of

*Raymond Fielding, The American Newsreel 1911-1967 (Norman, Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press, 1972), p. 276.

*Raymond Fielding, The March of Time 1935-1951 (New York: Oxford University Press), passim.

silence was, of course, the print media. The wire services and local newspapers covered international events in great detail but in an attempt to assess a national view of Adolf Hitler it seems necessary to turn to the periodical literature which had a nationwide following

For this research, the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature was used to select twelve periodicals with a moderate to large readership in which articles appeared on Adolf Hitler between 1933-1938 (before the outbreak of World War II). The particular periodicals were chosen not only because of their circulation but because of their interest in publishing articles about Hitler. Altogether ninety articles were surveyed from these six years, the number from each particular year fluctuated according to the amount of interest in the topic shown by the periodicals themselves (see Figure 1).

In many respects the 1930s was a halcyon era for American periodicals. That decade witnessed huge leaps in circulation for some magazines and sealed the death warrant for others. In 1930, twenty U.S. magazines had circulations of over one million; six had average circulations of over two million and four actually had an average readership of over three million. Of course, many of the magazines with large circulations were aimed at the general public with limited or no concern for international events. Reader's Digest and The Saturday Evening Post, two of the magazines surveyed, generally fall into this category. Yet, both did publish articles about Hitler: the Post as early as 1933 and Reader's Digest

Figure 1

The Number of Articles Surveyed 1933-1938 Per Year

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
1933	27	30%
1934	12	13.3%
1935	10	11.1%
1936	13	14.4%
1937	16	17.8%
1938*	12	13.3%

Total Surveyed: 90

*Time Magazine's 1939 "Man of the Year" Selection which was Adolf Hitler was counted and surveyed as a 1938 article since it dealt primarily with events which occurred in 1938.

beginning in 1936. Of all of the magazines surveyed, Reader's Digest was, in fact, one of the most popular in the 1930s. Its format of condensing previously published articles and concentrating on themes with mass appeal led it to have a readership of over three million in 1937.*

Review of Reviews and Literary Digest used a similar format of condensing material from other sources as the core of their articles though neither could claim the wild success experienced by Reader's Digest. Both of these magazines were concerned with more serious topics than Reader's Digest. Neither sought mass appeal but aimed at presenting a "quality magazine" for the educated middle classes.^{1*} The North American Review, Current History, Living Age, and Harpers Weekly also did not seek to be popular periodicals and, in fact, the latter relished in its influence over the "serious elements of the community." The Nation, the "grand dame" of serious magazines and The New Republic were both leftist publications whose coverage of international and domestic events were quite controversial in the 1930s. As historian Theodore Peterson noted, The Nation and The New Republic both antagonized the public because they espoused unpopular views at a time when most magazines advocated no opinion or conservative opinion on social and political issues. While all of the "quality" magazines surveyed accepted their role of influencing only a narrow, elite public

*James P. Wood, Magazines in the United States (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1971), p. 229.

^{1*}Theodore Peterson, Magazines in the Twentieth Century (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 156.

rather than a wide range of people, all paid for their narrow focus with declining readership in the 1930s demonstrating that providing coverage of international events for public consumption was growing more and more difficult.¹¹

The remaining two periodicals, Time and Newsweek, though competitors, shared the common goal of trying to breach the gap between popular and quality magazines in the 1930s. Time, founded in 1923 and Newsweek, begun in 1933, each sought to present the weekly world and domestic events in a lively and fairly objective fashion. Though Time's editorializing was mixed in with the news coverage more than Newsweek's largely impartial coverage, the broad range of subjects both printed, the use of background research, and group journalism appealed to a market wider than just the business community and young college graduates that each specifically targeted. They were certainly gaining popularity over the "cut and paste" format of magazines like Literary Digest which was, in fact subsumed by Time in 1938.¹²

Absent from this survey, of course, is a host of magazines with larger circulations which found their way into an increasing number of American homes. Popular magazines like Ladie's Home Journal, McCalls, McClures, Colliers, and Life were dedicated to mass readership and judiciously stayed away from most controversial or unpopular subjects. Thus, of these mass magazines only Colliers

¹¹Ibid., p. 413.

¹²Wood, p. 204-240; Rita Simon, Public Opinion and the Immigrant: Print Media Coverage 1880-1980 (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath, 1985), p. 62-64.

featured an article about Adolf Hitler between 1933-1938. This suggests perhaps that, with the notable exception of Reader's Digest which did reach a wide American audience, the general public, who was not enlightened by movies, radio or newsreels, learned little about the man who was changing the course of European history. Therefore, when the idea of American "public opinion" is addressed in connection with Adolf Hitler, it is well to ask whether the less serious and less educated had an opinion on which to draw.¹³

In assessing these periodicals' coverage of Adolf Hitler in the pre-war years, several consistent themes emerge. First, in the early years of Hitler's rule, most articles, with the exception of those appearing in The Nation which was persistently anti-fascist, attempted to present unopinioned, factual accounts of events in Germany or to strike a balance between positive and negative points of view. For example, the Living Age forum which ran monthly, featured Germany and articles about Hitler frequently but always presented a balanced picture often by giving space to German writers to explain their positions on Nazism and Hitler. Several publications, like Literary Digest, Time, and Review of Reviews published excerpts of important speeches given by Hitler, in effect allowing the American people themselves to decide opinion about the conduct and plans of the German dictator. When this objectivity eroded by the end of the 1930s, however, it was a clear-cut signal

¹³For a discussion of the development of the serious and popular magazines in America in the early nineteenth century see Ben Gates, "A Subject for the Serious Community: Public Opinion of the Income Tax, 1893-1913", paper presented for a seminar on Progressivism in America, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1989 (Mimeographed).

of the hardening of American attitudes toward Hitler and the Nazi regime.

Another theme clearly displayed by early commentaries on Hitler's rise to power were the links between Nazism and traditional German militarism. Hitler was just another Bismarckian figure to many who, while posing a threat to European peace and security, was generally not viewed as representative of a new ominous form of dictatorship. Perhaps because contemporaries lacked the hindsight afforded to historians, there never was an attempt made in the articles surveyed, to distinguish between Adolf Hitler and other current or previous dictatorships.

The magazines surveyed also had an enormous interest in examining Hitler's claim of pacifism. Beginning as early as March of 1933 when Germany was still officially demilitarized by the terms of the Versailles Treaty, publications all over the world began to speculate on Hitler's plans for Germany and for Europe. How did journalists' treatment of Hitler's persistent peace overtures shape America opinion and perhaps its isolationism?

Another area on which these magazines concentrated quite heavily was Hitler's personal life. If anything at all shaped Americans' views of Adolf Hitler from these publications it must certainly be the fascination shown in numerous articles about the fuhrer's private activities. It is particularly interesting to note, for example, that many of these periodicals, which covered other aspects of Germany in their pages, dwelt almost exclusively on Hitler's personal life when covering stories devoted to him. Not

only is the content of these articles important for the way they shaped American views of Hitler but the tone and description found in many suggest that even though Germany posed a greater and greater threat to Europe's peace and security, many simply could not regard him seriously.

The magazines which consistently covered Adolf Hitler in the 1930s displayed particular interest in 1933, the year the Nazi leader came to power. Thirty percent of the ninety articles surveyed during the entire six year period appeared in that important year. While there was natural trepidation over what "Hitlerism" could mean for America, most publications were willing in the beginning to give the new chancellor an opportunity to prove himself. Only six of the thirty were clearly anti-Hitler and most sought to maintain, as many did up to the end of the 1930s, a rigid balance of opinion about the Nazi dictatorship.¹⁴

Early commentaries on the rise of Hitler in Germany often associated Nazism with other manifestations of militarism in Germany and thus dismissed it as in effect "nothing new." In an article published in the Saturday Evening Post F. Britten Austin maintained, for example, that Hitler was just another in a long line of German statesmen going back to the humiliation of Jena in 1806 who sought national unification for Germany. The Literary Digest in its analysis of Hitler's rise to power even suggested the possibility at

¹⁴For a discussion of the Nazi threat in America see "Nazi Politics in America: Are Nazi Agents Spreading Propaganda Here?" The Nation 137: (November 29, 1933): 615-617; and Johan Smirlenko, "Hitlerism Comes to America," Harpers Weekly 167: (November 1933): 660-670.

least of the re-emergence of monarchism in Germany. Finally, even the staunch anti-fascist columnist Dorothy Thompson felt that Hitler represented the continuing militarist tradition in Germany re-wakened by the loss of World War I. Indeed, if anyone was to blame for Hitler's rise to power, Clifford Sharp of Living Age maintained, it was the allies because of the stupidities and blunders brought about by the Versailles Treaty. The attitude of defeat and leaderlessness which Nazism proclaimed to overcome was perhaps best expressed in Newsweek's summary of the Reichstag election of March 1933. "Hitler will have his chance to save Germany from bolshevism, bankruptcy and oppression from abroad, as he has vociferously promised to do and as an impoverished humiliated and weary people empowered him to do."¹⁸ Thus, it was certainly not true that throughout the Nazi regime, Hitler's fascism was immediately recognized as a particularly new threat nor was Hitler himself regarded as performing a role that was fundamentally different from what had previously occurred in Germany.

Despite the association of Hitler with previous German regimes or perhaps because of this, journalists and others were concerned immediately about Hitler's military intentions. During all of the six years surveyed, sixteen articles dealt specifically

¹⁸F. Britten Austin, "Old Time Germany Looks at Hitler," Saturday Evening Post 206 (August 5, 1933): 10-11 and 62; "What Hitler's Rule Means to the World," The Literary Digest 115 (April 8, 1933): 1-2; Dorothy Thompson, "Back to Blood and Iron: Germany goes German Again," Saturday Evening Post 205 (May 6, 1933): 2-5, 67-74; Clifford Sharp, "Hitler Will Stop," Living Age 344 (August 1933): 480-488; and "Hitler Sits Firm in the Saddle," Newsweek 1 (March 11, 1933): p. 7.

with Hitler and the question of war. On this most important issue for the American public to consider, the opinion to be drawn from these publications was decidedly mixed. Eight articles sought conciliation with Nazi Germany or expressed their confidence in Hitler's repeated vows of peace. Undoubtedly, Hitler's aggressive domestic speeches and his persecution of the Jews upset the public, however, it appeared that when international protest erupted, he was willing to be conciliatory. For example, President Franklin Roosevelt's May 1933 call to fifty-four nations of the world to disarm led Hitler to proclaim "peace with equality" and to state that Germany was "ready at any time to renounce aggression." His statements were fully translated by the Literary Digest on May 27, 1933. Even the skeptical New Republic claimed in 1933 that Hitler, despite his desire to create a new reich was bound to be hampered by his sworn obedience to the Weimar Constitution.^{1*}

It was perhaps natural to view Hitler's words as sincere in the early years of his rule. Indeed, a majority of the articles promoting conciliation were published before 1936. Yet, there is no clear cut break with this attempt to question Hitler's sincerity even as late as 1938. In December, for example, after the Munich crisis, Aga Khan proclaimed his faith to be still in Hitler and suggested that the way to build a "real world peace" was to negotiate a non-aggression treaty between Germany, France and

^{1*}"Hitler Proclaims Peace with Equality," Literary Digest 117 (May 27, 1933): 10; Hans Gatzke, Germany and the United States: A Special Relationship (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 110; and H.V. Kaltenborn, "Heil Hitler," The New Republic 90 (February 13, 1933): 9-11.

Britain. It was not perhaps until war itself came that such illusions were finally put aside.

Skeptics of Hitler's many overtures to peace were equally persuasive. While The Nation led all of the publications in warning about Hitler's sincerity, it was not alone in seeing through his phoney pacifism. The Literary Digest, The New Republic, and even Reader's Digest voiced their growing concerns at the dichotomy between the fuhrer's words and his deeds. Despite the general public ignorance of the contents of Hitler's book Mein Kampf, three of the articles attempted to warn their readers that Hitler had, in fact, come to power with a specific blueprint which he intended to instigate. The attack on Hitler's sincerity reminded constant throughout these six years but was, unfortunately heavily concentrated in The Nation which was very unpopular in the United States during the 1930s. While the perennially popular Reader's Digest offered its subscribers sugar-coated condensations of Hitler's private life in 1936 and 1938, it waited until December of 1938 to publish a one page compilation of quotes Hitler made beginning in 1933 in which he persistently denied desiring various territorial acquisitions. The short article was entitled with intended irony, "How Good is Hitler's Word."¹⁷

It is difficult with this apparent split in opinion to determine how Americans might view the real motives of Hitler in the 1930s. Certainly, the western European countries were no better in

¹⁷Leland Stowe, "How Good is Hitler's Word," Reader's Digest 33 (December 1938): 38.

determining what course of action Hitler would take; his "Saturday surprises" became infamous after 1936. Yet, it is possible to conclude that the differing opinions on Hitler's intent to provoke aggression helped convince many of the urgent need for the United States to remain aloof from it all. After journalist George Fielding Eliot, writing for The New Republic warned of Hitler's aggressive schemes especially in Eastern Europe (as predicted in Mein Kampf), he goes on to urge that America "must preserve that which is ours behind our ocean barriers. The salvation of the European democracies is in their own hands. They can still save themselves. If they will not, they have no right to expect us to save them."¹

Along with America's and, in fact, all of Europe's concern about the future military plans of Germany, there was in addition in these twelve publications an inordinate curiosity about the nature of Hitler's private life. Perhaps it was because of the way the press shrouded Germany in mystery, perhaps it was because of a natural attraction to power, but for whatever reason, between 1933 and 1938 an astounding twenty-three of the ninety articles surveyed dealt specifically with Hitler's personal life. Interest never waned from March of 1933 when Newsweek ran a pictorial essay on Hitler at his Bavarian retreat through May of 1938 when Reader's Digest condensed in its book section a look at Hitler's private life by historian Stephen Roberts. Besides demonstrating an overwhelming

¹George Fielding Eliot, "Hitler's Balance Sheet," The New Republic 95 (25 May 1938): 65.

curiosity to see into the life of the man who controlled the new German Reich, these articles also reveal an interesting portrait of Hitler. Rather than concentrating on a foaming, frothing, screaming orator, as do so many post-war documentaries, these articles showed a man with austere habits, rather Puritanical in nature who did not drink, smoke, eat meat or womanize. "The Nazi is strictly mid-Victorian," Roger Shaw in Review of Reviews declared in 1933..."To those familiar with conditions in post-war Berlin, many of these attitudes are highly salutary--for Europe's second city had become 'wide open' as Paris never thought of being...[Hitler] is distinctly a municipal clean up man."¹ Of his austere habits, while attempts were obviously made to uncover an unsavory side of his personal life, none were exposed, even though questions about his sexuality were frequently bantered about in these articles. In fact, there was such fascination with Hitler's daily routine that Newsweek in March of 1933 ran an essay describing his life at Berchtesgaden and even published an article which featured an expose of his diet. "For breakfast, he eats eggs, milk, bread and jam; for dinner and supper: eggs, salad, vegetables and preserves. A reporter asked him if he ever tired of his diet. Hitler replied: I vary it. One day I eat eggs and salad and the next day I eat salad and eggs. That is the only joke anybody ever heard him make."²

¹*Roger Shaw, "Has Hitler Scored," Review of Reviews 57 (September 1933): 42.

²*For the pictorial essay reproduced see Newsweek 1 (March 2, 1933): 13; "Hitler: The Cocksure Dictator Takes Timid Soul Precautions," Newsweek 3 (April 6, 1935): 16.

Despite Hitler's failed academic and artistic career which was discussed in the periodicals (Living Age published a copy of his secondary school report cards in an article in 1936), there was also a tacit recognition of the of the man who went from failed housepainter (a common misconception, repeated time and again) and German army corporal to the dictatorship of a powerful Germany. It was the classic Horatio Alger story come true. As writer Thomas Bailey noted as early as 1940, Hitler was in accord with American tradition. "From frustrated housepainter to Chancellor of Germany, master of Europe and architect of more human misery than any other man living or dead--that is an epic of which Horatio Alger never dreamed." When Hitler returned to Austria in 1938 after the Anschluss one mid-western newspaper, according to Bailey, even proclaimed, "'Local Boy Makes Good.' Americans may hate his methods but many admire his results."¹ This struggle for success, several authors claimed, produced in Hitler a certain mysticism, an uncommon sixth-sense, a fixity of purpose, a tendency toward hard work, and a solemn sense of loyalty which carried his followers forward with him.

Of course, all of these personal accounts were not favorable toward Hitler and, in fact, the articles reveal an important shift beginning in 1937. He was viewed by some as too feminine, as weak, a man with "white and flabby hands, which are

¹ Thomas Bailey, The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1940), p. 37.

unexpected for a former housepainter."²³ He was seen as humorless, excessively fearful for his personal security, and ignorant on almost every important subject. As author John Gunther bluntly stated, "Hitler cares nothing for books, nothing for clothes, nothing for friends and nothing for food and drink...his lack of knowledge of even the practical details of finance, as of economics, is profound."²³ To this chorus of criticism was added in 1938 growing doubts about his sanity. In fact, in that year three separate articles appeared which openly questioned Hitler's mental state and suggested a variety of mental disorders which might afflict him. To Dr F.H. Moss writing in Current History he lived in a paranoid world, "not unlike the dream of many a patient in an asylum." Dr A.A. Bull reached a similar conclusion stating for The New Republic that Hitler was a "psychopathic paranoid personality whose sole need is hatred" Hitler was prone to be a "neurotic who has weeping fits and bouts of melancholia." He was an "infantile personality." Stephen Roberts whose book on Hitler's life appeared in Reader's Digest in May of 1938 suggested that Hitler was "pathological. He lives in a mental world of his own, more aloof than any Sun King."²⁴

²³ "Hitler: The Cocksure Dictator Takes Timid-Soul Precautions," Newsweek 3 (April 6, 1935): 16.

²³ John Gunther, "Hitler," Harpers Weekly 172 (January 1936): 150-152.

²⁴ Joseph Jastrow, "The Dictatorial Complex," Current History 49 (December 1938): 40; "Is Hitler Crazy," The New Republic 98 (November 9, 1938): 31; Stephen H. Roberts, "The House that Hitler Built," Reader's Digest 32 (May 1938): 112.

Finally despite the obvious threat which Germany increasingly posed for Europe, there was an unwillingness on the part of many journalists to treat Hitler with the seriousness which his increasingly aggressive course of action warranted. By the time The Great Dictator was released in 1940, associations between Charlie Chaplin and Adolf Hitler were quite common. His mustache was a point of great amusement in the press and at least in five of the articles, Hitler was specifically referred to as Charlie Chaplinesque. But at the same time, there was a tendency to view him as a clown who was running a circus more impressive than P.T. Barnum's. Newsweek described the 1935 Nuremberg rally as a "Big Top" and "arena" with "sideshow" and a "ringmaster". Oswald Garrison Villard, editor of The Nation described Hitler as a "master showman" who proved that "many more than one sucker are born every minute."²⁰ Hitler was persistently described as the "little man" and "handsome Adolf." Time viewed him alternately as the "pudgy but intuitive little man," "emotional and intuitive little Adolf" or as the "little high-strung Austrian."²¹ To an American public trying to sort out the fact from the fiction of Hitler's life, these articles presented a tone which, though innocent and meant to be

²⁰"Hitler Decrees Swastika Reich Flag; Bars Intermarriage; Relegates Jews to the Dark Ages," Newsweek 3 (September 21, 1935): 12; Oswald Garrison Villard, "The Nazi Child Mind," The Nation 137 (November 29, 1933): 614.

²¹"Tantrums into Triumphs," Time 30 (July 5, 1937): 14; "Let's Be Friends," Time 27 (March 9, 1936): 21; and "Plan vs. Plan vs. Plan" Time 27 (April 13, 1936): 24.

entertaining, also left the unmistakable impression that Hitler was a man not to be taken quite seriously.

What does all of this trivial knowledge about Hitler's personal life in these periodicals amount to? Of the twenty-three articles dealing with Hitler's personal life sixteen were favorable or neutral (69.5%) toward him. The remaining seven were published after 1935 and demonstrate, it would seem, a clear deterioration of opinion toward Hitler, the individual. Certainly, these personal portraits did not make America sympathetic to the Nazi regime. Several historians have demonstrated that even Germany's overt attempts at propaganda failed to do this. However, with little coverage of the frantic Nuremberg rallies, of Hitler's powerful and frightening oratory skills and of his personal role in shaping Germany's actions, he does not in many instances appear any different from other statesmen of his age like Franklin Roosevelt, a man who was also treated ambivalently by the press. While Americans certainly did not condone Germany's aggressive actions nor its persecution of the Jews, Hitler personally was seldom, if ever, given direct blame for these actions. Often he was viewed out of the scene of such important events as the Roehm putsche of 1934, the Nuremberg Laws against the Jews in 1935 and other actions which the United States regarded with such trepidation. "I am convinced," Stephen H. Roberts maintained, "that all of the brutal sides of his [Hitler's] movements pass him by. The killings, the repressions, the imprisonments do not belong to the world of the imagination. He

is too remote for them."²⁷ Indeed the very normality of his surroundings and activities as portrayed by several of the articles would almost leave one with the impression that he was the unwilling pawn of ambitious advisors.²⁸

Did America's view of Hitler aid in the creation of a "Hitler myth?" In many respects, yes. Like the Germans, according to historian Ian Kershaw whose work The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich, is a major contribution to current historiography on the subject. Americans viewed Hitler as the fulfillment of Germany's longstanding leadership ideal; he was another Bismarck. Hitler with his "mid-Victorian" morality was regenerating the nation, a task some looked to with favor. He stood aloof from the selfish, crass political scene, he did not seem to take part in the coarse brutality that occurred around him. Hitler, the "clown" was also portrayed as Hitler the "mystic" with powers of instinct that seemed to defy human reason. Mixed with the sarcasm, the tongue-in-cheek humor, and the fascination with Hitler's diet, there was in America in the 1930s a definite 'Hitler myth', borne out of ignorance, disbelief, and, occasionally, misinformation.

Yet, it would be wrong to see this "Hitler myth" translating into pro-Nazism or a failure of Americans to see what was happening in Germany. Within the same periodicals that covered

²⁷Stephen Roberts, "The House that Hitler Built," Reader's Digest 32 (May 1938): 112.

²⁸For a particularly domestic and sympathetic portrait of Hitler see Ignatius Phayre, "Holiday with Hitler," Current History 44 (July 1936): 50-58.

Hitler shaking hands with happy German peasant in Berchtesgaden there were also ominous reports about places like Dachau. Hitler may have provided temporary legitimacy for his regime but, like the "Hitler myth" in Germany at the end of World War II, the myth eroded in America when the reality of Hitler the liar, Hitler the aggressor, Hitler the fanatic began to become apparent in 1938. What these articles, photographs, even cartoons suggested to American then, however, was that isolation from Europe's affairs, whatever the cost, was the only way to keep America safe.²²

²²For a full explanation of the "Hitler Myth" see Ian Kershaw, The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

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Wallace H. White Jr.: Radio's Quiet Back Stage Negotiator

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ABSTRACT

Senator Wallace H. White Jr. was a veteran broadcast communications legislator. During the last years of his tenure in the United States Senate he was described by Newsweek as one of the ten top Senators in the nation. In almost every radio and television history text White is mentioned as the co-author of the 1927 Radio Act and the 1934 Communications Act. It is odd, that amid this discussion of legislative evolution, that so little is written about the individual who did more to successfully achieve legislation than any individual within the halls of the legislature. White's colleagues often chided him about not seeing his picture in the paper. However, White preferred the quiet process of negotiation. The purpose of this account is to describe Wallace H. White and his contributions to the history of broadcasting.

Wallace H. White Jr.: Radio's A Quiet Back Stage Negotiator

Wallace H. White Jr. was a veteran of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. He was described by Newsweek as one of the top ten Republican national leaders.¹ He served on Capital Hill for thirty years. Broadcast historians immediately recognize his name as a co-author of the 1927 Radio Act and the Communications Act of 1934. Yet very little has been written about Senator White beyond these facts. Eric Barnouw and Philip T. Rosen have noted that White's attempts in behalf of radio legislation began in the early 1920's with the Radio conferences. They both discussed the main difference between White's Radio Bills and others which were presented, this was that White placed the regulatory authority in the hands of Secretary Hoover,² who had "all licensing power -- without review by the courts." Sterling and Kittross also noted that it was White who took the recommendations of the first National Radio Conference, February, 27, 1922 and introduced legislation to the House of Representatives.³ It passed the House on its second try in 1923. Edward F. Sarno and Marvin Bensman discussed the National Radio Conferences and regulation by the Department of Commerce. Both noted again that it was White's leadership which resulted in his utilization of the information from the first conferences as a technical basis from which his proposed radio laws.⁴ However, in all of this discussion there was nothing written of White himself, who he was, what were his contributions to broadcasting?

Broadcast historians discussing legislative history have focused largely on the 1927/34 legislation.⁵ However, the study of the major personalities involved is only beginning. The news and commentator personalities of broadcast history have been described by Fang,⁶ in his text those Radio Commentators, but in relation to those personalities involved in the development of broadcast legislation little has been written. Dill has been credited with getting the Radio Act through the Senate.⁷ Daniel E. Garvey and C.M. Janskey discuss Herbert Hoover's contributions to broadcasting.⁸ Even Senator Borah, who was a colorful yet tangential figure,⁹ has been described as influential.

It is odd that amid the discussion of legislative personalities, so little has been written about the one individual who was first on the radio legislative scene and worked throughout three decades in the process. Wallace H. White has contributed more to broadcast legislation throughout his career than any other legislator. The purpose of this account is to describe Wallace H. White and his contributions to the history of broadcasting.

The Republican Politician from Maine

White was born at Lewiston, Maine, August 6, 1877. He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1899 and studied law at Columbia University. He was admitted to the bar in the District of Columbia in 1902 and began his career in law at his fathers firm of: White and Carter,¹⁰ in Lewiston, 1903. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1916 as Maine's second district Congressman. He served first in the extra session

called by President Woodrow Wilson, April, 1917.¹¹ White was one of the few men in Congress who served through World War I. Many of his colleagues, including his radio colleague Washington's Senator Clarence C. Dill had their careers cut short because of their vote on WWI.¹²

Maine's coastal interests in the fishing and marine industries dictated White's initial legislative agendas. As the grandson of the former Senator William P. Fry, of Maine, White served for a time as his grandfather's personal secretary while Fry was Chairman of the Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries and the Committee on Commerce. Later White occupied his grandfather's place as Chairman of these same organizations. According to Congressman Hersey, White, took "the torch out of the hands of his grandfather and is today bearing it to victory..."¹³

White was described as a traditional Republican politician undeviating in his loyalty to Republican policies.¹⁴ His colleagues saw him as "that warm hearted fellow from the North Country,"¹⁵ a practical politician with a humanistic approach to the issues of public concern. White saw the public problems as, "merely a great many private and personal problems rolled into one big ball," according to White, we must deal with them as problems involving... people."¹⁶

White's career was not marked with spectacular press attention, he was the "quite back stage negotiator," not a press personality or even a legislative debater.¹⁷ In his exchanges with legislative colleagues his voice would barely carry to

the legislative hall galleries. Newsweek described him in not to flattering of terms as, "short, slight, and sad-eyed; amiable,¹⁸ but reticent." The "gentle and uncontentious, soft spoken and retiring Mr. White was more valuable... as a quite backstage negotiator than as a debater."¹⁹ White may not have been flamboyant, but "his earnestness and his knowledge was such," that according to Senator Dill, White was a very "persuasive man... when he fought you he fought in the open. He didn't go around to hide anything."²⁰

Wallace H. White's popularity was characterized in the services he rendered. He was a capable creator of legislation as illustrated in the 550 bills, resolutions and amendments he authored, the 216 reports he rendered and the 385 addresses he delivered during his legislative service.²¹ He was a trusted confidant of both Presidents Coolidge and Hoover, serving under both Republican Presidents. According to the Maine Journal his crowing achievement was in the passage of the Jones-White Shipping Bill, which was passed into law as the Merchant Marine Act of 1928.²² White took what were the foundations laid by his grandfather and "the disorganized rout of merchant marine legislation, at a moment when it seemed hopeless and by tact and common sense saved it..."²³

Radio Legislative Efforts

It was White's work in Merchant Marines and Fisheries, and his association with Secretary Hoover that brought him into the arena of radio legislation. At the time radio was a natural outgrowth of his ship-to-shore legislative efforts. However,

science soon made radio a "whispering gallery of the skies" and radio became one of the most important pieces of legislation Representative White would author.²⁴ The 1927/34 Acts were primarily legislation of his authorship, and today they continue to guide our most powerful form of popular communication.

Radio's deepest legislative roots were with Representative Wallace H. White. As noted earlier most historians assume White's involvement followed the first Hoover Conference Recommendations, 1922 with the first legislative efforts following shortly thereafter.²⁵ While this bill is one of the earliest of the new era, the roaring 20s, it was not White's first radio legislation.

Three years earlier, in 1919, White had been named Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Radio. This was a new sub-committee of the Merchant Marine Committee and had its first meeting was in November, 1919. Members of the committee included: William B. Bankhead, Joshua Alexander, Frederick W. Rowe, Carl R. Chindblom,²⁶ Sherman E. Burroughs, Rufus Hardy and Wallace H. White. White's first radio was introduced into the House of Representatives December 3, 1919. H.R. 10831 directed control of radio to the President of the United States and the Secretary of the Navy. Authored by White it was referred directly to the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. This bill and its predecessor H.R. 11779, introduced, January 15, 1920 were designed "only to fill the gap until a general [radio] bill can be gotten into shape."²⁷ Broadcasting was new when legislation was first introduced. The exigence of World War I and the rapidly growing technical complexities in the "development of this art"²⁸ directed the efforts of those involved as can be seen in the subtle changes

between HR 10831 and 11179. Only a little more than a month passed between both bills, however, the latter suggested control of radio by the Secretary of Commerce; and, indicated that all stations were to be taken over by the U. S. government. These early attempts at legislation may seem insignificant from the point of view of a legislative history, but they were a first for White and represent the beginning of a learning process which made White one of the most knowledgeable in the legislature.

White's background and leadership were founded in the marine and commerce industries, so with the exigence of World War I, and the newness of radio, White sought out and obtained assistance from the Departments Marine & Fisheries, Commerce and the Navy in drafting his first bills. These avenues provided the wealth of information over the next decade. The support White received from these departments can be easily seen even as late as 1927. In the months just preceding the passage of the 1927 Act the New York Times in an article endorsing the White Bill noted the "almost unanimous approval it has received" from the Secretary of Commerce, The Department of Commerce, the Navy Department, the War Department, the Shipping Board, and the Coast Guard.²⁹

After World War I broadcasting moved from the eras Sterling and Kittross refer to as the prehistory to the beginnings of broadcasting.³⁰ White's first work has its roots in the pre-history era. It was during the 'beginnings' era that Hoover called the first Radio Conference, February 27, 1922, and as noted, it was Representative White who proceed to draft the

proposed legislation from the recommendations of the conferees.³¹
During each of the conferences the experience of Wallace H. White provided leadership and legislative action. By the late 1920s³² White was known in the House for his "perennial radio bills."³³
During the Third conference White participated with Subcommittee No 8, the Coordinating Committee which Hoover Chaired, and White Chaired the Sub Committee No 4, Problems of Marine Communication.³³ During the fourth and final conference, White had the responsibility of chairing committee No. 9, which was copyright Relations to Broadcasting.³⁴ While White's perennial radio bills fell upon the ears of a disinterested legislature, each succeeding bill grew with the refinements and complexities of growing technology.

Most historians associate the White Radio Bills with control of licensing with the Secretary of Commerce. There is no doubt that this was the issue which received the publicity. However, this was not the only issue of primary concern for White. The issue which took up the most time in conference committees of 1925 and 1926 was White's concern for the public interest. According to Dill, this was the key of the 1926 Conference Committee, "He [White] was so given to the idea of public service."³⁵ White's career was noted for service and no where it this more apparent that in radio legislation. He was an outspoken advocate of the public rights in broadcasting:

We have reached the definite conclusion that the right of our people to enjoy this means of communication can be preserved only by the repudiation of the idea under lying the 1912 law that anyone who will may transmit and by the assertion in its stead of the doctrine that the right of the public to service is superior to the right of any individual

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to use the ether [radio].

Senators Dill, Borah, Howell and other legislators took their cues in drafting their radio legislation from Representative White. Critics noted that these attempts were often nothing more than mere publicity maneuvers to have their names attached to legislation -- the bills were very similar. Dill admitly modified White's provisions, with the exception of the Commission versus Secretary of Commerce as being the central figure, otherwise the bills were largely identical. "I got a hold of a copy of the bill [of] Congressman White's. I took it, an changed it some and made a Commission."³⁷ Even Senator Borah's radio bill contained most³⁸ of the provisions initially drafted by Representative White.

Why then do we hear so little about White? White's, colleagues often chided him about not seeing his picture in the paper or the headlines proclaiming his achievements. It was because White preferred quiet diplomacy:

The truth is that when the pictures were being taken in the bright sunlight outside the Capitol, White more likely was to be found at work in some musty murky committee room... his record is not to be found in the dusty archives of the press, rather [the records] of a quarter century attest to conscientious service.³⁹

So, it is with White's work in radio legislation. He sought to avoid publicity, working backstage in the development of what he deemed public interest legislation. In 1926, when he was invited by Robert D. Heintz the Washington, D.C. correspondent for the New York Times to author and "authoritative argument in favor of your bill,"⁴⁰ he declined. "I feel very strongly that Dill ought not to be debating this matter in the public press."⁴¹ White did not want a protracted discussion of radio in the newspapers, however,

he was not oblivious to the situation and left the door open. His reluctance to debate in the press did not mean he was avoiding a fight.

Dill and I ought not to be getting into print on this subject. If however, he goes ahead I think we could get a reply into the papers. We might be justified, if Dill starts the thing by an article in the Times, in giving just as wide publicity to our reply as possible. I feel that I can show the Senate Bill up and will undertake to do so if Dill starts the thing.⁴²

In the final conference committee hearings of 1926 White negotiated for the strong public interest provisions of the law and gave way temporarily to the issue of Commission control. Later he remained active and fought diligently to retain the Commission and enact the refinements of the 1934 Communications Act.

Summary

White was a member of the House of Representatives from 1917 to 1931 and the Republican Senator from Maine from 1931 to 1949. Representative Larsen commenting on White's contribution to radio legislation said:

The gentleman from Maine, Mr. White, in my judgement, deserves a great deal of credit. He knows more about this legislation, I believe, than any other man at either end of the Capitol (applause). He has worked on it almost continuously for three years and has worked intelligently honest and sincerely.⁴³

The 1927 Radio Act, as it wound its way through Congress, was known as the White Radio Bill. White's negotiation talents were very apparent in the radio arena. It was Senator White who without the flair of oratory and after passage of the 1927 Radio Act, acquired the support of Secretary Hoover and the signature

of President Coolidge.⁴⁴ By 1928 he was even an outspoken⁴⁵ opponent of the Federal Radio Communication. White's concern for public interest is ever present today. In a speech made before the National Broadcast Association, October 26, 1931, White continued to extol the public interest virtues of the law. It was the public interest provision of the law which gave it "the virtue of flexibility," for a growing and dynamic new⁴⁶ industry.

There is much research yet to be undertaken on the contributions of Senator Wallace H. White to broadcasting. We know little of his involvement in the issues that followed in the 1930's and 40's. We know only at this juncture that it was Wallace H. White who more than any other single individual was the quiet behind the scenes personality who founded broadcast legislation as we have it today.

Footnotes

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28. See Note #27 and Garvey for discussion on radio as art.
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38. See Godfrey & Limburg for a discussion of Borah.
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"The Journalist as Iconoclast:
H. L. Mencken and the Free Lance"

A research paper submitted for possible presentation
at the annual convention
of the
American Journalism Historians Association

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THE JOURNALISM AS ICONOCLAST: H. L. MENCKEN AND THE FREE LANCE

The publication of The Diary of H. L. Mencken, edited by Charles A. Fecher¹, seemed to be a mini-bombshell. The diaries revealed that Mencken was anti-Semitic and contained racial and anti-feminist slurs of various kinds. There was both outrage and defense. The winner of a Mencken Award, given annually by the Baltimore Sun for work that reflected the courage and style of Mencken's work, returned his award to the Sun, and was thinking of returning the money, or donating it to anti-alcoholism work on an Indian reservation.² Carl Bode, a Mencken biographer, said he was stunned at the extent of the reaction.³

In truth, those who are familiar with Mencken's work, particularly the Free Lance column which he wrote for the Baltimore Sun from 1911-15, would not have been surprised. The column, instituted shortly after the Evening Sun began publishing in 1910, was a wide-ranging platform for Mencken's biting, satirical, bombastic but well-phrased opinions on just about everything under the heavens. Beginning with local targets -- moral reformers, city politics, blue laws, prohibitionists -- Mencken was soon lambasting such revered American institutions as democracy and religion. As he described it in a letter following the column's demise in 1915:

General aim: to combat, chiefly by ridicule, American piety, stupidity, tin-pot morality, cheap chauvinism in all their forms. Attacked moralists, progressives, boomers, patriots, reformers, and finally Methodists, etc., by name.⁴

The various battles fought in the Free Lance -- most waged with humor, some with near viciousness -- left their effect upon Mencken. By the time of the column's demise, an acid penned, irreverent rebel had fully crystallized upon the American scene. And though he never took up the "lance" again, Mencken never really abandoned the polemical style of the column. As he assessed it in retrospect:

My work for the Sun between 1910 and 1915 greatly facilitated the organization of my ideas. I conducted a column that was highly controversial and every statement I made in it was instantly attacked. This pressure forced me to examine my notions very carefully. I emerged from the experience very tough-minded and with considerable skill at controversy.⁵

It was his ability to provoke controversy that led to the end of the Free Lance. The column became a fixture, usually a column long on page six of the Evening Sun, until public outrage at Mencken's support of the German war effort led the Sun to terminate the Free Lance in October, 1915.

It is the purpose of this paper to review briefly Mencken's journalistic preparation to be a columnist and the essentials of his intellectual position, but primarily to synthesize major themes and trends in the four-year run of the Free Lance. Although there is a considerable body of literature on Mencken's life and work, rather scant attention is paid to the Free Lance column as part of his journey into American life and letters.⁶ One column per week for the four-year life of the Free Lance was analyzed, for a total of 200 columns.

When Mencken sat down to his typewriter on May 9, 1911, to pound out his first column, he was thirty years old, a twelve-year veteran in journalism, already the wielder of a diverse

arsenal of tenaciously set opinions. The eldest of four children born into a prosperous tobacco business family in Baltimore, Mencken reluctantly entered his father's business after he graduated in 1896 as valedictorian of Baltimore Polytechnic. He was a voracious, critical reader and later said he doubted that "any human being in the world ever read more than I did between my twelfth and eighteenth years."⁷ His dutiful dedication to the family business ended when his father died. He began hounding the offices of the Baltimore Morning Herald. The paper's city editor, Max Ways, after enduring a month of ambitious loitering, finally sent a relentless Mencken out into a winter night on his first assignment. His first story appeared Feb. 24, 1899, and dealt with the theft of a horse and buggy valued at \$250.⁸ By July he was a fulltime \$7-a-week reporter and sold his share of the tobacco business to an uncle. He worked at the Herald until its collapse in June, 1906; by then, he was the paper's editor-in-chief. The roots of the Free Lance were put down in this period, when he penned occasional columns in the Herald. Along the way, he published critical analyses of George Bernard Shaw's plays and the philosophy of Fredrich Nietzsche, among others. He became editor of the Sunday edition of his ex-rival, the Sun, in July, 1906. It was journalism, of course, but his reportorial and intellectual energies were a bit stifled in the job. As Carl Bode described it, "No part of Mencken's life as a newspaperman ever remained uneventful but the closest to it was his first four years on the Sun."⁹ Mencken had been submitting editorials and essays, including some to New York's Smart Set, signed simply "M" or "H.L.M.,"

pieces that were brimming with promise. They made Mencken the obvious choice when the Sun -- at the suggestion of a stockholder, Harry C. Black, who came back from London with praise for columnist Horatio Bottomley. Such a controversial columnist was what the Sun needed, and he added, "Whoever H. L. M. is -- he can do it."¹⁰ The first column was headed "The World in Review," appearing May 8, 1911. The title must have seemed too serious, because it changed to the more casual "Free Lance" the next day.

Exploring the rudiments of Mencken's Free Lance iconoclasm -- the rhetorical expression of the opinions he generated -- is replete with surface ironies, particularly when juxtaposed with the hyperbolic outlines of the Mencken legend. Though many of the "Baltimoralists"¹¹ upon whom he leisurely feasted were given ample reason to assume the Free Lance was suckled by wolves, his childhood reflects no green vision of rebellion, nor does one find in his home life, parental or sibling relations causes for his mature iconoclasm. But in Mencken's criticism of the pre-Free Lance period, the roots of his philosophy are laid bare. In his introduction to his book on Shaw's plays¹², he revealed much of what attracted him to Shaw when he divided the playwright's characters into two distinct classes, "the ordinary folks who represent the great majority, and the iconoclasts, or idol smashers." In Charles Darwin, one finds a writer who had demonstrable impact on Mencken. Writing in Shaw, he analyzed the debate over values in the early twentieth century. "Darwin made this war between the faithful and the scoffers the chief concern of the time."¹⁴⁷ Mencken's first exposure to Darwinism came as a

child, when he discovered a "series of cheap reprints of scientific papers, including some of Herbert Spencer."¹⁵ Spencer, a contemporary and friend of T. H. Huxley's, stressed the application of scientific methods to social phenomena, and coined the immortal phrase, "survival of the fittest" in his Principles of Biology. These concepts are intrinsic to Mencken's thought, becoming so thoroughly engrained that, as John Burr observed, for Mencken "common sense boasts all the characteristics of scientific skepticism."¹⁶

Sumner's social applications of Darwinian theories added a particular cultural relevance to Mencken's notions of evolution. Sumner once lamented that the industrious members of society are constantly burdened by misguided efforts to spare the inefficient failure from the edicts of natural selection. "A drunkard in the gutter is just where he ought to be," Sumner observed in an 1883 lecture.¹⁷ Mencken empathized with the individual who is forever burdened by the mob, who must suffer beneath both its excesses and its restrictive moral efforts to redress them. Much of this line of thought was drawn directly from Sumner. In a 1932 letter to a Yale professor, Mencken wrote: "The books of your old chief, Dr. Sumner, made a powerful impression on me when I was young, and their influence has survived. I only wish such things as 'The Forgotten Man' could be printed as circulars in editions of millions."¹⁸

In T. H. Huxley, Mencken found an intellect edged with wit and Darwinian insight that was expressed with a clarity of style that he freely admitted to imitating. In 1922 he wrote,

"My style of writing is chiefly grounded upon an early enthusiasm for Huxley, the greatest of all masters of orderly exposition. He taught me the importance of giving to every argument a simple structure."¹⁹ Beyond mere stylistic influence, Huxley epitomized for Mencken the crux of Mencken's iconoclasm, an element of idealism, a belief in progress through struggle that remained the underlying dynamic of the Darwinian legacy. Mencken wedded Darwin to Friedrich Nietzsche, struggling to graft Nietzsche onto the Darwinian tradition, playing up the evolutionary impetus in the philosopher's thought, while rejecting whole portions of his rhapsodic visions, as well as grim plunges into nihilism and, ultimately, his suicide in 1900. He did, in his book²⁰, faithfully portray Nietzsche as a bitter enemy of pervasive moral structures like Christianity, a belief in the inherent sloth and ineptitude of the herd, and the necessity of the individual to rise above it. Elements of pure Nietzsche came to the surface with the outbreak of World War I, ultimately leading to the silencing of the Free Lance.

The above is too brief to fully outline the intellectual influences underneath Mencken's emergence as an iconoclast in the Free Lance, but it will do as background.

The Free Lance was essentially a prolonged socio-political commentary featuring the opinions and prejudices of Henry Louis Mencken. Within this prevailing and discernible pattern, however, Mencken mixed a variety of tidbits reflecting a serious interest in the language, a love of quotations and one-liners, and a prolonged fascination with what George H. Douglas termed "the psychopathology of everyday

life."²¹ The result came at the reader with all the structured miscellany of a shotgun blast. His research for The American Language, published in 1918, is evident in the column, as he solicited examples of language discrepancies and publishing such bizarre linguistic lists as sixty-six synonyms for beard -- "stalactites, kraut, fringe..."²² His interest in language showed up in epigrammatic quotations, as well as the flagrant attention given the hackneyed platitudes of local officials. Particularly dreadful cliches were awarded prizes like a "pair of honorary pallbearers gloves."²²

The daily machinations of humankind were of continual interest to the Free Lance, in the form of comic relief, criticisms of the shuffling herd, or, at times, the source of sensible and enduring truths. In his glorification of bachelors and free-spirited drinkers, as well as his criticisms of educators, politicians and clergymen, Mencken essentially celebrated the incredible variety and conflict of life's passing parade. Despite his disdain for the masses, Mencken could not resist a fascination with his conception of Everyman, a protean figure who as cop, coroner, barber or drunk was both the eternal victim and the collective oppressor. This reflected his sense of the inbred weakness of democratic rule, the knowledge, as Douglas termed it, that our "energy, drive, and exuberance...convert to frenzy and anxiety more often than to high civility and social stability."²³ Overriding these interests were the predominant dual currents of political and social commentary. In politics, these ranged from local salvos to the vitriolic attacks on President Wilson's prewar policies. In social commentary, he attempted

reforms and battled with reformers.

On the political spectrum, William Howard Taft's nondescript administration provoked little more than benign contempt from Mencken, and had less than two years to run when he began the column in 1911. The failed comeback of Teddy Roosevelt in 1912 and the Democratic convention held that year in Baltimore turned Mencken's political commentary to the national level. Wilson's arrival in 1913 and the rising tides of war across the Atlantic kept most of the Free Lance's political criticism at a national level until the column's demise. He started at the local level, on targets within easy range. Mayor James Harry Preston, a Baltimore lawyer and ex-speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates, took office for held office for eight years, beginning at the same time as the Free Lance. The Sun and the Free Lance waged war with Preston, and the column was the principal source of most of the "furious arguments" and "waspish gibes," as Mencken described the campaign against Preston.²⁴ He never accepted the legitimacy of Preston's office-holding, and often opened his column with a boxed account of the number of days remaining in Preston's administration: "Three years seven months and thirteen days more -- and it will seem a century."²⁵ Preston made a strong bid to become the vice-presidential nominee for the front-running Champ Clark of Missouri. The Sunpapers backed Woodrow Wilson; his ultimate election combined with that support put the newspapers on the "municipal black list, and (it) never printed any advertisements of tax sales and city contracts."²⁶

But while his newspaper supported Wilson, Mencken never

held any reverence for him, and this schism with management became an irreparable breach during the war years. Mencken characterized Wilson as a man who "has taught school too long to have any ideas left."²⁷ Mencken favored the comeback effort of Roosevelt, but only because "the greatest comedian of modern times" would be more interesting.²⁸ Roosevelt epitomized the flagrant emotionalism at the root of democracy. "When he puts on his cowboy's hat and polka-dot neckcloth and climbs upon his prancing cayuse not one man out of a hundred stops to consider him intellectually."²⁹

Mencken's belief in the inherent and glaring limitations of government by majority rule was contrasted with his desire for a kind of aristocracy of the enlightened minority, truth-bearers who aid the advancement of civilization despite the stagnant ineptitude of the herd.

Mencken claimed to be "almost completely devoid of public spirit"³⁰ but occasionally championed causes aimed at sparing the common man some ~~measure~~ of suffering, though in the Mencken scheme of things human failings were generally a sign that the edicts of natural selection would have their due. Taxation was one such issue, a bridge between politics and social reform. It was a misguided institution that kept the bulk of the populace in want and the encroaching branches of government in waste. The arguments ring across 75 years or so to those who are still outraged by taxation.

The state...is a professional swindler...Theoretically, it collects enough money each year to pay the actual expenses of government--not a cent more. But actually it collects enough in addition to pay a handsome profit to thousands of men who are...engaged in the universal human business of getting as much money as possible for as little work as possible...If every taxpayer refused to pay more than 50 percent of his taxes, the efficiency of the government would

not only suffer no diminution, but would probably be vastly augmented.³¹

Although tax reform was a persistent theme for Mencken, his most vocal and persistent reform campaign came in reaction to Baltimore's health problems, particularly the spread of typhoid. The Free Lance contended that the city's water supply was contaminated and a principal source of typhoid infection, an opinion that ran counter to the aims of city "boomers." Column upon column either opened or concluded with stern warnings like: "Boil your drinking water! Beware of soft c(ribs and ice cream! Send your money to the boomers!"³² His continuing lament that Baltimore would remain a "pest-hole"³³ until a new water filtration plant was built was turned back on the apathetic public with a satirical form of a traditional Anglican prayer: "From persons who say of the city water that it is all right save for its taste, and from those who say that it is all right save for its looks, and from those who say it is all right save for its smell -- Good Lord, deliver us!"³⁴

It was in connection with health issue⁵/that Mencken's racist remarks were likely to arise. In his defense, one might say that racism was accepted, and acceptable in public discourse -- at least to a point --in that period. And, Mencken's iconoclasm and its resulting commentary spared no race, creed or color. When he was censured at the 1948 convention of the Progressive Party for noting that the keynote speaker had "the complexion of a good ten-cent cigar,"³⁵ Mencken responded that no one denounced him as a "white-baiter" when he wrote that "Herbert Hoover had a complexion like unrisen dough."³⁶ Thus, the discussion of

Mencken's racism is nothing new -- right or wrongness aside. Columnists in the Free Lance period worked at a time when blatant racism could be printed as opinion, and that opinion filtered into the news. Mencken evidenced this trend with his contention that much of Baltimore's typhoid problem could be traced to the "pestiferous niggero."³⁷ The Free Lance admitted that "we pay no heed for their condition," but went on to put the public on guard, telling them that the "negro consumptive, running at large, and spreading the infection is a menace to us all."³⁸

His racism continued in his simplistic approach to the crime rate. Claiming that blacks committed more crimes, the Free Lance of June 28, 1911, pointed to the "unfairness of counting them when criminal statistics are being reckoned...they constitute a class apart, a separate caste of abnormally vicious and disorderly citizens." He went beyond the conventional when he urged on Nov. 8, 1912, that the Fifteenth Amendment, which granted blacks the vote in 1870, should be abolished. It was "passed sentimentally, at a time of great popular passion, and I daresay that nine-tenths of all thoughtful Americans have always been against it."

These remarks contrast with some of the passing, brief scholarly apologia for Mencken's racism in earlier comments by Bode, who noted that Mencken was "nice to negro children who lived along the alley behind his house,"³⁹ or W. H. A. Williams who said in an understated way in Mencken's defense, that the man "was not a liberal on racial matters." Alistair Cooke concluded that "he always lamented the wretched conditions in which most of them lived and saved his contempt

for the Southern -- or Northern -- whites who thought of themselves as the black man's superior."⁴¹ Based on Free Lance material alone, it would be difficult to defend Mencken on charges of racism, beyond saying that the column was sadly in tune with the temper of the times.

The assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, began the countdown toward the removal of the Free Lance on Oct. 23, 1915. Early on, in 1914, he welcomed war in a ludicrous, Darwinian manner.

War is a good thing because it is honest, because it admits the central fact of human nature. Its great merit is that it affords a natural, normal and undisguised outlet for that complex of passions and energies which civilization seeks so fastuously to hold in check.⁴²

His cynical humor faded as he was eventually confronted with near-paranoic suspicion and contempt. The metaphorical journey into exile occurred slowly, with vehement reactions in the letter column, the split with the Sun's pro-Wilson management, and the inevitable removal of the column. He did continue to write for the paper after the Free Lance was suspended, with even some commentary on the war.

His controversial stand on the war stemmed principally from his idealization of the German nation, traceable to his German-American background, the influence of Nietzsche and the reinforcing vacations abroad in 1908, 1912 and 1914. His dread of puritan zeal, rooted according to Mencken in England, led him to simple pro-German, anti-England posture. Against this, he romanticized customs from abroad. The Free Lance generally depicted America and England during the war in terms of mob-rule, the pervading faceless herd. Germany was more often described in terms of a rational, but with spirited

individuality, recalling the German-American complex of values that Mencken adopted from the bourgeois world of his father. His predictions and views were consistently wrong or contrary to the prevailing sentiment in his country and community. If the Germans won in Belgium, the Americans would be for them he said on Aug. 15, 1914, something which didn't come to pass. The persistent English claims of German atrocities aligned them with the conspicuously righteous elements he had been battling in the social arena: "Their sole object in this war, it appears, is to force the Germans to be virtuous."⁴³ The Germans aligned against the puritan elements in England were "fighting for the security of their homes against English bullying and English intrigues."⁴⁴

Increasingly, Mencken idealized the German spirit as the Mailed Fist, the bearer of truth, the iconoclast among nations, a state that need offer no excuses for its involvement in the war. In the end, the effective Allied propaganda campaign, the idealization of Germany, the sinking of the Lusitania and his defense of it, the split with the Sun's pro-Wilson management, and Mencken's own particularly offensive style combined to break the Free Lance. Though he left the Free Lance thinking all battles had been lost, it didn't prove to be so.

To a postwar nation disillusioned by the shattered venture to save democracy, and witnessing the daily failure of the prohibition experiment, Mencken's old Free Lance rhetoric and bluster would become fashionably rebellious. ~~By~~ treating the world around him with the old familiar, unflagging disdain, by maintaining the very offensive nature that had stirred up the

animals, the former outcast would become a popular critic, with a much larger audience and platform. Declaring that he had emerged from the column "very tough-minded and with considerable skill at controversy,"⁴⁵ Mencken proved that he had prepared himself to become a spokesman of the Jazz Age. He would seldom be remembered as the Free Lance after that decade, but as the "Lion of the Twenties."

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F. G. Bonfils, Teapot Dome
And the Founding of the
American Society of Newspaper Editors:
A Struggle Over Professionalism
During America's Jazz Age

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"F. G. Bonfils, Teapot Dome and the Founding of the American Society of Newspaper Editors: A Struggle Over Professionalism During America's Jazz Age."

On February 8 and 9 of 1924, Fred G. Bonfils, the elegant, mustachioed co-owner of the Denver Post, testified before a Congressional committee probing alleged bribes paid by millionaire oilman Harry F. Sinclair in his acquisition of oil reserves, known as the Teapot Dome in Wyoming. With the straight face Bonfils had by reputation acquired as a high stakes gambler in Kansas City, he told committee members Sinclair had given him \$250,000 not as hush money but as partial payment for his prior claim to the property. Committee members were not impressed, charging Bonfils with collusion in the illegal sale of the reserves and with impeding an investigation of the deal¹ by the editor of the Albuquerque Morning Journal.

Bonfils involvement in the budding scandal which would also implicate John C. Shaffer, publisher of the Rocky Mountain News, and lead a month later to the resignation of Albert B. Fall, the secretary of the interior, provoked widespread condemnation in the press. Typical was the attitude of Editor and Publisher, which charged flatly that Bonfils' "greed" had "humiliated" the press and "lessened public faith" in it during a time in which the ethics of "tabloid" journalism had put the whole profession on the defensive.² The industry's trade publication confidently predicted "the little, cynical minority who prey on newspapers...to compensate for their own inferiority and journalistic incompetence"³ would not be allowed to stand. The recently passed Canons of

Journalism by the newly formed American Society of Newspaper Editors "have taken a bulldog grip on the minds of the nation's editors," Editor and Publisher felt certain, and would swiftly lead to "notice being served on the 'Typhoid Marys of Journalism,'" that there was no place for them within the profession.⁴

This paper analyzes the founding of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the decade long controversy that enveloped it over the discipling of one of its most notorious members---Fred G. Bonfils. Establishment of A.S.N.E. by the nation's elite editors and its struggle over whether to enforce its code of ethics in the Bonfils case, brings into sharp relief the Jazz Age debate over journalistic professionalism. The controversy divided the infant organization, briefly threatened to kill it, and highlights the clash over occupational respectability in an era in which the journalist's self-identity seemed in particular dispute.

This study was undertaken at the urging of Loren Ghigliione, current president of A.S.N.E. and editor and publisher of The News of Southbridge, Massachusetts, and was made possible through the cooperation of A.S.N.E. executive director Lee Stinnett. Research was begun at A.S.N.E. archives at the Newspaper Center in Reston, Virginia in December 1989. All minutes of the meetings of the A.S.N.E. boards of directors during the decade of the 1920's were examined as well as convention proceedings published under the title Problems of Journalism. In addition, the author had the opportunity to examine a small collection of letters from Casper Yost, the St. Louis Globe-Democrat editor, the prime mover behind the formation of A.S.N.E. My thanks to his grandson, Robert W. Yost, for making those letters available.

Casper Yost and the Founding of A.S.N.E.

Malcolm Bingay, editor of the Detroit Free Press, notes that Casper Yost first raised the idea of a national association of newspaper editors in 1912. Bingay remembers Yost's dream was "the creation of an ethical organization of American newspaper editors...banded together on the common ground of high purpose." Yost's intent was evident in his development of a "Business Code of Ethics" which in March 1922 urged all businessmen to recognize their profession "is essentially founded upon integrity," thereby requiring publication of "a definite and known standard for business conduct" to which "businessmen who show little or no respect for ethical principles" would be held accountable. A similar sentiment, expressed in his The Principles of Journalism, urged "all journalists to realize we are members of one body, having collective interests and collective purposes." The application of common standards of ethical practice would allow journalism "to take its place among the great professions."

The January 1922 issue of Atlantic Monthly contained an attack on the press which, while mild by contemporary standards, was enough to provoke Yost into a second effort at organizing his fellow editors. Frederick L. Allen, under the title "Newspapers and the Truth," quoted leading critics of his day in lamenting the excesses of Jazz Age journalism. "What makes yellow journalism really dangerous," Allen charged, "is not so much its appetite for scandal as its continual distortion of the news in the interest of undiluted entertainment." He urged more conscientious publishers

and editors to formulate "a code of newspaper ethics" to⁸
quarantine their profession from further contamination.

Yost's irritation stemmed from his conviction that "general
attacks upon the integrity of journalism as a whole reflect upon⁹
every newspaper and every newspaperman." So instead of responding
to Allen's attack in the editorial pages of the Globe-Democrat, as
was his first thought, he decided instead to launch a second effort
to organize his colleagues. That meeting, involving Yost, Erie
Hopwood of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Edward S. Beck of the
Chicago Tribune, Charles H. Dennis of the Chicago Daily News and
George E. Miller of the Detroit News took place at Chicago's
Blackstone Hotel in February 1922. Beck remembers that Yost's idea
of a national association of newspaper editors seemed so sensible¹⁰
"it took hold at once."

By the time these men met again in April following the
annual convention of the American Newspaper Publishers Association,
eighty-nine editors had by letter expressed an interest in forming
a national association of newspaper editors. A constitution was
adopted and forty-nine editors signed it, enrolling themselves
as the organization's charter members. The organization from its
outset was intended as a voice for the nation's elite editors,
those who saw themselves as the custodians of the "most influential
journals" of their day. Future membership was restricted to¹¹
newspaper editors serving populations of 100,000 or more. Yost
was named the organization's president. He wrote his wife that founding
editors hoped the organization would grow to become "the greatest thing¹²
that has ever been done for journalism."

Those hopes would be hampered by the deep ambivalence of the society's members to the disciplining of those whose actions had "dishonored" the profession.¹³ The constitution's preamble described the organization's purpose as promoting "acquaintance among its members" for the purpose of maintaining "the dignity and rights of the profession" by "considering and perhaps (emphasis added) establishing ethical standards of professional conduct." The constitution affirms the complete independence of its members "in editorial action." while stating that it is not the purpose¹⁴ of the society to "punish" those who labor in the profession.

The conflict between a determination to enhance the status of their occupation and a reluctance to punish members whose actions disgraced the field of journalism can be seen in A.S.N.E.'s decade long struggle over its code of ethics. At the organization's first annual meeting on April 27-28, 1923 in Washington, D.C., Yost told the fifty-seven editors present that "the society has no more important purpose" than "establishing ethical standards of professional conduct." Yost explained that "the ethics of journalism must be somehow expressed in definite form" and be "established as the rule of practice of an influential number of journalists...by which all journalistic conduct may be measured."¹⁵ There was general agreement on the usefulness of such standards if not the method of their enforcement. Dennis spoke for a majority of his colleagues when he said, "the working of such standards" would allow newspapers to approximate "the best ideals of the profession," while allowing the industry to speak in one voice against "the terrific broadsides of half-truths" that it

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had been subjected to.

The code of ethics, or canons of journalism, prepared by Yost's friend Henry J. Wright, editor of the New York World, and adopted at A.S.N.E.'s first annual meeting had the twin purpose of establishing a criteria of conduct for newspapermen, while at the same time alerting press critics to the fact that something was being done to clean up the "profession" by men who saw themselves as the moral standard bearers of that profession. The code's call for "truthfulness, impartiality, fair play and decency," by its own admission "lacked the authority of enforcement."¹⁷ Wright's effort to establish a Grievance Committee to interpret the code and give it "teeth" was rejected after stormy debate. James Williams of the Boston Transcript¹⁸ feared the organization "was biting off more than we can chew." David Smiley of the Philadelphia Public Ledger warned a binding code of ethics "was laying the foundation for trouble and a split in this organization." Smiley did not believe A.S.N.E. could "set itself up in anything approaching the board of censors¹⁹ of the Bar Association."

Those advancing a code that would be binding on its members were led throughout the decade by Willis J. Abbot of the Christian Science Monitor. Abbot was convinced that journalism's drive toward professionalism was confounded by his era's "appetite for sensationalism," whose preoccupation was the "chronicling of that which is offensive in life and repugnant to ordinary decency."²⁰ Abbot warned the society it would make itself a national laughingstock if it adjourned after passing "a lot of

meaningless resolutions" which did not materially advance the cause of journalistic professionalism.²¹ Abbot's argument proved particularly successful with the organization's younger members. George A. Hough, Jr., editor and publisher of the Falmouth (Mass.) Enterprise, and a recent graduate of the Columbia University School of Journalism, thought Abbot had the courage of his convictions that older members perhaps fearing the risk of lawsuits,²² appeared to lack.

The code of ethics and constitution which were approved at A.S.N.E.'s organizational and first annual meetings left open the degree to which either would be enforced on miscreants. This was a point not altogether understood by critics of Jazz Age journalism, who tended to applaud the establishment of a code of conduct for American newspapers. The New York Times published the canons in their entirety and gave front page play to President Warren Harding's assurance that "there never was a time when a fitting code of ethics was so essential to the press of America."²³ Henry Luce's newly born Time magazine completely misrepresented the matter in claiming, "The American Society of Newspaper Editors aims to be to journalism what the American Bar Association is to the legal fraternity."²⁴ Marvin H. Creager of the Milwaukee Journal came nearer the truth many years later when he observed, "There were recruits who were all for putting on a star and running the grafters and rowdies out of newspaperdom. To many it looked like a good idea.²⁵ Others doubted that it would work."

The founding of A.S.N.E., the character of its constitution and the controversy over its code of ethics reflect the difficulties

journalists had in establishing their occupation which could command the standing often enjoyed by doctors, lawyers and clergymen. It was probably not, as Hough alleged, that "old fogies" within the infant organization were "scared of libel." This more clearly reflects the pecking order which divided senior editors and newcomers to the job in their association's earliest days. Beck claimed in a letter to the New York World's Arthur Krock that journalists were unable to enforce a code of ethics on members because journalists were "employees" unable to take full responsibility for editorial or business practices with which they might disagree.²⁶ While there was some truth in this, a greater problem in establishing a code of ethics to which journalists would be held accountable lay in journalistic values. A reading of A.S.N.E.'s convention proceedings and minutes during the decade of the Twenties suggests members placed high value on their independence and were chary of any organizational association which might cause them to surrender it.²⁷ A good example of this sentiment was the veteran editor of the New York World, Herbert Bayard Swope. Swope argued eloquently for a code of ethics "to preserve the integrity of journalism as a whole," but was equally concerned that "unless we be cautious" the ethical code "will be played against ourselves" and "we will be hoist by our own petard."²⁸ The gentlemen of American journalism had "a hunger to be respectable" during the Jazz Age but a competing appetite to remain free in going about their business.²⁹

Journalism and Professionalism

Jazz Age journalists saw theirs as a "restless" generation in which the underlying values of their culture seemed the subject of intense skepticism and debate.³⁰ Thomas L. Haskell has observed this "crisis of professional authority" had first arisen in the late 19th Century as a consequence of social and intellectual reorientation arising out of urbanization, industrialization and modernization.³¹ Within this changing social setting, several leading occupations formed associations and developed codes of ethics. Personnel managers organized in 1916, industrial administrators in 1920.³² Codes of ethics were adopted or proposed for the nation's judges and engineers in 1922 and its businessmen in 1925.³³ The professionalization of social workers attracted the attention of sociologists in 1915.³⁴ A definition of professionalization was developed in 1928, when A.M. Carr-Saunders noted that professions were occupations which were based upon specialized intellectual study and training, the purpose of which was to supply skilled service to others for a definite fee or salary.³⁵

There has been considerable development in the understanding of professionalism since Carr-Saunders pioneering study, it beginning with his assertion in 1933 that several thresholds needed to be reached before occupations could be considered fully professionalized.³⁶ Harold L. Wilensky has observed that in the "heroic power struggles and status strivings for professional identification" few occupations "make the grade."³⁷ One of the primary reasons for this, according to William J. Goode, is that "while industrializing society is a professionalizing society,"

professional communities often forget they are "communities within larger communities." These larger communities will refuse to grant the newly emerging profession the status it is seeking until that profession "is willing to police members" claiming the same expertise.³⁸ Bernard Barber notes that while leaders of occupational groups "may take great pains to construct and publish a code of ethics...the codes they contrust are full of vague generalities, and therefore hard to apply in concrete cases." Leaders may attempt to overcome this problem by strengthening professional association, hoping to instill professional values through "self-control, socialization and education," Barber observes, but historically, this has rarely satisfied the public's demand for specialized training linked to an enforced standard of professional conduct.³⁹

In perhaps the first sociological study of journalists, Carr-Saunders observed that newspaper work was a product of "collaborative crafts" which bore so little relationship to the requirements of a profession that the occupation "hardly came into the picture."⁴⁰ Carr-Saunders conclusion stemmed from his requirement, which has generally been accepted in sociological studies ever since, that in addition to prolonged and specialized training, a profession needed a continuing commitment of "service to the community." Journalism, he claimed, failed to show "a concern for the competence and honor of those who practice the profession" and had not developed a professional association "which would enforce standards of conduct" among its members.⁴¹

Leaders in journalism education had long been urging America's newspaper editors and publishers to take their work more seriously by establishing an enforceable code of ethics to encourage professional practice. Willard Grosvenor Bleyer, soon to become head of the University of Wisconsin's just launched journalism program, urged journalists in 1913 to follow the example of doctors and lawyers in "regulating the conditions of admission to practice" and maintenance of a "code of ethics" as part of journalism's "responsibility to the community."⁴² That had also been the call of James Melvin Lee at New York University, Dean Walter Williams at Missouri, Allen Sinclair Will at Rutgers⁴³ and Leon Nelson Flint of the University of Kansas. Flint noted that if journalists failed to hold colleagues accountable to a professional standard the public would do it for them. Until journalists created "machinery for the enforcement of standards," Flint wrote, "journalism would be a profession in nature and spirit but not form."⁴⁴

Academics saw business interests behind journalism's failure to win the respect or status of a profession. In the most famous textbook of the period, Kansas State's Nelson A. Crawford claimed that journalism would never be a profession so long as "those who come into it, turn to it as they would a dry goods business, failing to understand its history."⁴⁵ Crawford's critique found resonance within the journalistic community. Veteran Maine editor and publisher Ernest Greuning, writing in the September 1924 issue of Century under the title "Can Journalism Be a Profession?" decried "the ownership of newspapers by men who are in no sense journalists, but rather who view their property precisely as they

would a factory or a department store." ⁴⁶ The contention was extended by an anonymous newspaper man who wrote in the June 1925 issue of Harper's Magazine that "never were newspapermen as a class so lacking in purpose or so contemptuous of their profession, morally and intellectually, as they are today" when "building ⁴⁷ circulation was the substitute for editorial leadership."

During the Jazz Age, academics were heartened both by the growth of journalism schools and the development of codes of ethics by state press and editorial associations. The first School of Journalism had matriculated its first class in 1909. By June of 1926, The Journalism Bulletin was reporting the top 50 schools ⁴⁸ offering journalism courses had 5,532 students taking those courses. When the Council on Education for Journalism, made up of leading journalism educators, established standards for the teaching of journalism in 1925, Crawford thought journalism was well on its way in establishing itself as a profession comparable to law and ⁴⁹ medicine. Southern Methodist University's Albert Henning thought the standardization of journalism education would quickly lead to "qualifying tests for journalists" and instruments to expel ⁵⁰ journalists for "disobedience to ethical codes of conduct."

The first state press association to adopt a code of ethics was Kansas in 1910. It urged members to do nothing "which offended the sensibility of the most enlightened people" and to take seriously their "public trust." Similar sounding codes, emphasizing the press' public responsibility, were passed in Missouri in 1921, Oregon and South Dakota in 1922, and Washington state in 1923. The Illinois code adopted on April 25, 1925 defined journalism as a profession,

a public service and a business. Illinois' press code urged the enforcement of its standards "through the power of professional opinion." This, it argued, would mean "the charlatan in journalism will take his place with the shyster and the quack."⁵¹

Individual newspapers which previously had published no code of ethics followed the lead of the press associations in publishing rules of professional conduct. These included Abbot's Christian Science Monitor, the Brooklyn Eagle, the Springfield Republican, the Springfield Union, the Detroit News, the Sacramento Bee, the Seattle Times, the Kansas City Journal-Post, the Tampa Times, the Dayton Journal, the Wichita Beacon, the Philadelphia Public Ledger, the Danville Commercial News and the New York Globe. Dean Williams even developed a "Journalist's Creed" that was widely⁵² circulated.

The difficulty with such codes for advocates of journalism's professionalization was that individual newspaper practice often led to such codes being overlooked. Thomas A. Lackey of Notre Dame's commerce faculty noted that this was a natural consequence of the growing importance of advertising. Since two-thirds of all newspaper revenue now came from advertising, he reasoned, the publisher's first duty was increasingly not to his readers but⁵³ the delivery of large circulations to advertisers. Abbot had hoped responsible advertisers might lead the cleanup of the⁵⁴ nation's press. But Silas Bent argued the opposite was true and that the hunt for higher circulations made elite papers as interested in "romance, sex and crime" as the tabloids they⁵⁵ despised. Lee A. White, an editor with the Detroit News, spoke

for a lot of his fellow editors when he complained "the greatest single weakness of the press" is "our subservience to a largely imaginary public."⁵⁶ The New Republic noted, "One touch of murder⁵⁷ makes the whole press Hearst."

Advocates of professionalization within journalism urged A.S.N.E. to lead the fight by adopting tough standards which would be enforceable upon members. Greuning noted the irony that when A.S.N.E. gathered for their second annual meeting in Atlantic City on April 25 of 1924, the man who had drafted the Canons of Journalism, Henry J. Wright of the New York Globe, was no longer eligible to serve in the organization. His Globe along with four other New York dailies had disappeared during the year. As long as membership in the A.S.N.E. was determined not by the man but the job, and as long as those jobs were controlled by publishers whose first concern was profit, Greuning wondered what chance there was the nation's elite editors would ever take the high ground on ethics.⁵⁸ They would have their chance in Atlantic City when news that one of their members, Fred G. Bonfils had become embroiled in the scandal that shook the Harding administration, the Teapot Dome affair.

The Bonfils Deadlock

The American Society of Newspaper Editors opened its second annual meeting with no clear consensus on what to do about Fred Bonfils. The first convention had passed a code of ethics while leaving open how or if that code should be enforced. The Bonfils case gave the society an opportunity to punish one of its members charged with professional misconduct, and that is what worried

some members. Chief among them was James Williams of the Boston Transcript who the year before had led the fight against giving the canon enforcement powers. At the 1924 meeting of A.S.N.E. members, Williams found himself the chairman of the Committee on Ethical Standards, a sure sign that others within the society shared his fears. Williams spoke for them when he urged caution in the Bonfils case. "Plutarch having told us that character is long standing habit," Williams told members, "the best contribution this society can make toward the advancement of the code (was) to promote code obedience rather than code enforcement. Arthur Vandenberg, editor of the Grand Rapids Herald and soon to become a United States senator, objected. Vandenberg did not see how it was possible to adjourn the meeting "without telling the country that we mean what we say when we talk about ethics." Otherwise, Vandenberg stated, "a pretense of ethics" would be seen by the public as "a mere gesture."⁵⁹

Yost supported Williams' position, warning members the society was about to set a dangerous precedent. Williams articulated the precedent he was certain many members would not abide, and that was the possibility the society would become "a smelling committee for the American press." Other members agreed, arguing it was pointless to further "humiliate" a fellow editor who had already been forced to "bite the dust." But Vandenberg's position was sustained by a majority of A.S.N.E. members who finally sided with Walter Harrison of the Oklahoma City Oklahoman and his motion the society's board of directors⁶⁰ investigate a matter involving issues "as old as eternity."

Bonfils' name still appeared on A.S.N.E.'s membership roster when the nation's editors held their third annual meeting at the New Willard Hotel in January 1925. The matter never came to the convention floor by prior decision of the board of directors.⁶¹ Bonfils would be given "a reasonable time to prepare a defense" before coming before the board, but Yost reiterated to A.S.N.E.'s membership his conviction the board "did not possess power like the bar associations of the country to throw out our own members who transgress the ethics of the calling. We may disapprove of them and say so publicly but that is where our power stops."⁶²

Yost's attitude, initially, did not carry a majority of A.S.N.E.'s board members with him. Bonfils, accompanied by an attorney, appeared before the board on October 13, 1925 in Chicago. Transcripts of the entire afternoon's discussion, while not appearing in the board's minutes, were sent to each of the board members not present.⁶³ When A.S.N.E.'s full membership met in January 1926, a final decision on Bonfils was but a few weeks away. Yost, as outgoing president, perhaps the sensing the attitude of A.S.N.E.'s 12 man board, made his strongest statement yet about the enforcement power of the canon. "There are some among us who insist that we must have a code with teeth in it," he told A.S.N.E. members. "But what sort of teeth, how is it to bite and who is it to bite? I am unable to see any valid distinction between censorship of the press by this society and censorship of the press by any other society, political or otherwise."⁶⁴

On February 9, 1926, A.S.N.E.'s board of directors meeting in Cleveland took the step Yost had long opposed and ordered that

Bonfils "be censured and expelled from membership in the society" for conduct "conducive to the weakening or destruction of public confidence in the newspaper press." A copy of the board's decision was sent to Bonfils by registered mail in the understanding⁶⁵ that no one on the board would leak its decision to the press.

The members held their public silence, but privately Erie Hopwood, the Cleveland Plain Dealer editor who succeeded Yost as A.S.N.E. president, told his city editor, Nathaniel Howard, what happened next. Bonfils apparently "threatened to sue the society and each director for slander" before offering to quit the society if charges against him were dropped. This satisfied a majority on the board, who on the advice of counsel, decided in October 1926 to rescind its February action and to drop the matter entirely. But this hardly satisfied Abbot and his ally Klock, who were determined to make a floor fight of what Klock considered the board's "milkso⁶⁶p performance."

A last minute compromise headed off a showdown for one more year. Hopwood, citing the need to revise the constitution to put some "teeth" in it, named a committee composed of Yost, Dennis⁶⁷ and Creager to do just that. The following year that committee reflected the divisions within the society when it offered two alternative revisions of the society's constitution. The first amended the constitution to allow the board to proceed against members charged with unprofessional conduct. The second proposal, favored by a majority of committee members, would have deprived⁶⁸ the board of any power to consider such charges.

The committee proposals provoked one of the stormiest sessions

in A.S.N.E. history, producing a great debate which demonstrates the deep divisions over professionalism that had been stirred in the Bonfils case. Those opposing the policing power of the society again turned to Yost as their prime spokesman. At the society's April 1928 convention Yost told members "nothing is to be gained for the society or for journalism by the prosecution of members for unprofessional conduct. Ours is an institutional and not an individual profession." Since the society could not put newspapers on trial, Yost did not see how it was possible to punish an individual for what his newspaper might have done. "This is a society not of newspapers," he reminded members, "but a society of men."⁶⁹

Abbot led those urging an enforcement mechanism for the society's code of ethics. Abbot argued it was "intolerable" and "indefensible" that the nation's leading editors should not be able to punish members for "professionally unethical conduct." Paul Williams of the Utica Press wondered how journalism could be considered a "profession" unless it had the courage to act. Tom Wallace of the Louisville Times was convinced the society was at a "crisis." If it failed to act it might just as well "disband our committee on ethics and repeal our Canons of Journalism."⁷⁰

Opponents of Abbot's initiative resented his claim that they did not take professionalism seriously. "Just what is professionalism?" the Cleveland Plain Dealer's Paul Bellamy asked Abbot. The society's purpose, Bellamy argued, was not to strip a man "of the most valuable possession he has, namely, his reputation." Fellow board member Fred Fuller Shedd of the Philadelphia Evening

Bulletin concurred. To claim that someone was unfit for the journalistic profession, Shedd argued, would be to commit libel against him. Charges of unprofessional conduct, Creager agreed, were a matter of opinion not proof.⁷¹

Just as had been the case two years before, when the Abbot faction appeared to have prevailed in Bonfils' ouster, the 1928 convention appeared to endorse a change in the A.S.N.E. constitution to allow the policing of the code of ethics. Abbot's controversial amendment passed 16 to 15 and legal counsel was directed to change A.S.N.E.'s constitution accordingly. Later, however, it was ruled Abbot's amendment required a two-thirds majority. Final action by the A.S.N.E. membership on the enforcement provisions of its code of ethics was put off until the following year.⁷²

The Jazz Age was ending when A.S.N.E. delegates reconvened in April 1929 to reconsider their ethics code. That year's president, Walter Harrison, said he was certain that after years of historic debate, the society was "about to take a momentous step" in adopting a means "of expelling those who disgrace themselves or their profession through unethical acts." But Abbot's amendment, which had been drafted by American Bar Association president John W. Davis, lost by a vote of 21 for and 34 against. The tone of the meeting was captured by Samuel M. Williams, editor-in-chief of the St. Paul Pioneer Dispatch, who received rigorous applause when he said, "I am against censorship in all its forms, whether that censorship be imposed from without or constituted from within."⁷³

The drive for an enforceable ethics code within A.S.N.E. did not end in 1929. Abbot's amendment carried a majority of the A.S.N.E.

membership in 1930, but fell far short of the two-thirds majority he needed. The stalemate continued at the organization's 1931 convention. Finally, in 1932, all sides were prepared to settle the dispute with a final compromise. Fully ten years after the question had first been raised, A.S.N.E. members agreed, this time unanimously, that its board of directors did have the power to suspend or expel members "for due cause." Yost considered the compromise broad enough to earn his support. Shedd, that year's president, thought the result "meant more for the welfare, the growth and development of the society, and its general influence and power in the newspaper profession, than anything we could have done."⁷⁴

On October 23, 1975, A.S.N.E.'s board of directors, after several years of discussion, adopted a Statement of Principles, supplanting its 1922 Canons of Journalism. In the 43 years which had followed Abbot's 1932 amendment to Article VIII of A.S.N.E.'s constitution, the enforcement powers of the society in matters of ethical violations had never been employed. The preamble of A.S.N.E.'s 1975 Statement of Principles simply encourages its members to the highest possible standards of "ethical and professional performance."⁷⁵ Yost's argument that A.S.N.E. should be a voice of "moral suasion" and not "morals enforcer" had finally won out.

Journalism as Art, Business and Profession

The years after A.S.N.E. adopted its Statement of Principles the largest sociological study ever made of American journalists concluded their profession had passed through five historical

stages typically leading to the winning of professional status for other occupational groups. The study found that for 140 years journalism had been a full-time occupation for some. For 70 years journalism had had training schools. Its first professional organization had been formed 90 years before, and with the creation of the A.S.N.E. professional associations in journalism had expanded to include the occupation's best known editors. The study recognized how the journalistic community had been aggressive in its agitation for autonomy within its sphere of activity. Finally, the study observed that one of journalism's professional organizations had⁷⁶ promulgated a formal code of ethics.

This research has suggested that A.S.N.E.'s Canon of Journalism was the self-conscious effort by several elite editors to enhance the status of their work, in hopes of eventually winning for it recognition as a "profession." This effort failed for a variety of reasons both related and unrelated to the decade-long dispute over the canons highlighted in the Bonfils case. That controversy underscored the ambivalence of the nation's leading editors to their work, an ambivalence that has persisted since the passing of Jazz Age journalism.

While some journalists have simply assumed the professional⁷⁷ status of their occupation, others have shunned such pretensions. William P. Beazell, the veteran assistant managing editor of the New York World, told A.S.N.E. members at their 1929 convention, "Newspaper work is not a profession. It cannot be a profession. I happen to be one of those who regard newspaper work as one of the arts. We take things. We mould things...just as the painter or

sculptor does." ⁷⁸ The same sentiment can be seen a generation later in the attitude of syndicated columnists Joseph and Stewart Alsop who wrote that "newspaper reporting is not a profession, despite the complacent contrary belief of a good many reporters who have achieved the upper brackets. Newspaper reporting is a craft or trade, like ⁷⁹ undertaking, which it sometimes resembles."

The men who first formed the A.S.N.E. were former reporters who had achieved the upper brackets as editors. As a group they took great pride in what they did, whether they called what they did an art, trade, craft, business, or profession, and they loathed any individual whose conduct brought disrespect to his colleagues. A professional society and a code of ethics were intended as tools to upgrade the work that journalists did. That is why Yost's letters home at the time of A.S.N.E.'s founding indicates his real mission was to ⁸⁰ do something for journalism. Beck has written that that was the ⁸¹ attitude of each of the organization's five founding fathers. Hopwood, who died at the height of the controversy over the canons, thought the society could claim credit for the increasing ⁸² professionalism of the press. The nation's 81 million newspaper readers who annually read 18 billion papers, Editor and Publisher claimed, could thank the country's conscientious editors for ⁸³ "giving newspaper work the professional status it deserves."

Sociologists of the professions have pointed out that while many occupations have sought to elevate their status by calling themselves a "profession," few have succeeded. A major reason for the failure, according to Everett Hughes, is that the public resists the description and contests the rights and privileges

that would flow from it.⁸⁴ Theodore Caplow has described this as the means by which professions, like law and medicine, had⁸⁵ obtained popular consent for their claims of expertise. Eliot Fredison has pointed out that this consent is not easily won, for in granting it the public is acknowledging that the professional "is the most reliable authority on the nature of the reality he⁸⁶ deals with." Paul Starr has noted that historically the public submits to a profession's power of interpretation only when it is persuaded the profession's members share a "superior competency"⁸⁷ in the domain within which they claim authority.

A generation after the nation's editors began their great debate over a self-governing code of conduct, Curtis A. MacDougall observed that public opinion remained unconvinced American newspaper journalism was a profession, instead considering it a⁸⁸ business. The problem was not only that journalism appeared to lack a solid core of transmissible knowledge, but that it had failed to persuade the public that business interests did not⁸⁹ outweigh public service. This point was appreciated by Jazz Age editors who preached the gospel of public service, while privately bemoaning that the sins of "personal journalism" were⁹⁰ now being replaced by the sins of the "newspaper business." As Paul Bellamy colorfully put it, he could think of no "journalistic dispensation as lurid as the tabloid" and no reading public "which cared less for the important concerns of society" nor wished as⁹¹ much to be "entertained."

The effort to launch a national organization to protect the dignity of the elite press and to enhance the status of the

"profession" of journalism failed in its mission to establish that status through a set of self contradictions. No one organization could presume to speak for the journalistic profession as the American Medical Association and the American Bar Association spoke for the nation's doctors and lawyers. The A.S.N.E. constitution even excluded those editors whose papers or personal reputations were not large enough to merit membership. In the final analysis, however, it was not the hired hand who spoke most forcibly for his enterprise but the man who did the hiring. When asked his definition of a newspaper, Chicago Tribune publisher Col. Robert McCormick replied "a daily publication conducted for profit."⁹² William Randolph Hearst saw circulation as the true "test of merit" for any newspaper because it served to measure how well it "pleased"⁹³ the public." Journalism has become "a big business," Roy W. Howard, the editorial director of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, told A.S.N.E. members. "Organization and management does its stuff in the sanctums where genius formerly functioned, and the results are better."⁹⁴

There were many within A.S.N.E. who opposed the tendencies of their industry and what they saw as the withering of journalism's responsibility to its audience during the Jazz Age. The editor and publisher of the Harrisburg Telegraph, E. J. Stackpole, after 50 years in the business, knew "there is such a thing as ethics in newspaper work," but it was generally "the ethics established in the business office" and tied to "box office receipts."⁹⁵ Malcolm Bingay of the Detroit News "did not know what future scholars will call this age" but he thought it would be an era of "sensational

headlines" and pictures which proved "legs made circulation."⁹⁶
The Cincinnati Times-Star's Moses Straus noted on matters of ethics that a certain cynacism ruled. He told his colleagues, "We know that whether a newspaper is un-ethical or non-ethical, it is still quite successful." That was why "the question of newspaper ethics doesn't seem to touch our emotions." Journalists, he told fellow delegates, "have not grown in self-consciousness as professional men." As a consequence, "the profession of journalism was based on⁹⁷ (no) clear idea of what journalism is."

Journalism's fundamental contradiction---that it is both commodity and public servant---was behind the dilemma facing the founders of A.S.N.E. during journalism's Jazz Age. The irony was not lost on Casper Yost, whose circulation battles with the Pulitzers in St. Louis, made him well aware that newspapers must "aim at public service" even as they responded to a fickle public's⁹⁸ "need for news." Yost noted that his generation "gloried in its progress and its strength" but in the absence of any wisdom greater⁹⁹ than its fathers.

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Footnotes

1. New York Times, February 9, 1924, pp. 1-2 and February 10, 1924, p. 1. See also, Jonathan Daniels, They Will Be Heard: America's Crusading Newspaper Editors (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), pp. 312-317. Also, Gene Fowler, Timber Line: A Story of Bonfils and Tammen (New York: Garden City Books, 1951), pp. 405-408.
 2. Editor and Publisher, February 16, 1924, p. 36. For background, see M. R. Werner and John Starr, Teapot Dome (New York: Viking, 1959) and Robert L. Perkin, The First Hundred Years: An Informal History of Denver and the Rocky Mountain News (New York: Doubleday, 1959).
 3. Editor and Publisher, February 23, 1924, p. 44.
 4. Editor and Publisher, May 3, 1924, p. 26.
 5. "A Dream Come True," an article by Malcolm W. Bingay, appearing in the April 23, 1946 Detroit Free Press, p. 4. My thanks to Casper S. Yost's grandson, Robert W. Yost, Jr., for bringing my attention to the article.
 6. Yost's work with the "council Table," composed of St. Louis area educators, statesmen, writers, business and professional men, including his development of a "Business Code of Ethics" is described in his obituary which appears in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, May 31, 1941, pp. 1-2.
 7. Casper S. Yost, The Principles of Journalism (New York: D. Appleton, 1924), preface and pp. 152-156.
 8. Frederick L. Allen, "Newspapers and the Truth," Atlantic Monthly, January 1922, pp. 44-54.
 9. Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s first annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1923, p. 18.
 10. Yost's recollections of his motivation for starting the A.S.N.E. are described in that organization's 1932 proceedings and are summarized by Alice Fox Pitts, Read All About It!---Fifty Years of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (Washington, D.C.: American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1974), p. 3. This is generally consistent with Yost's remarks before the first meeting of the A.S.N.E. membership. See Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s first annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1923, pp. 14-21.
- For Beck's recollections of the reasons behind A.S.N.E.'s founding see his article, "A.S.N.E. Remains Enduring Memorial to St. Louis Editor," appearing on p. 3 of The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, June 4, 1941.
11. Minutes of the American Society of Newspaper Editors organizational meeting, April 25, 1922, p. 1. American Society of Newspaper Editors archives. Newspaper Center. Reston, Virginia.

12. Letter from Casper Yost to Anna Yost, dated April 25, 1922. My thanks to Robert W. Yost for a copy of this letter.

13. A.S.N.E.'s constitution was modified at its organizational and mid-year meeting on October 22, 1922 to include editors who had attained "distinctive rank" in metropolitan dailies within population centers under 100,000. See A.S.N.E. Minutes, April 25, 1922 meeting, p. 2 and A.S.N.E. Minutes, October 10, 1922 meeting, pp. 6-7.

14. Constitution for the American Society of Newspaper Editors, originally adopted in New York City, April 25, 1922 and amended in 1932. A copy was provided to the author by Lee Stinnett, executive director of A.S.N.E., Reston, Virginia. The constitution was developed under the guidance of American Bar Association President John W. Davis.

15. Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s first annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1923, pp. 18-19.

16. Ibid., pp. 21-22.

17. A.S.N.E. Minutes, April 28, 1923 meeting, pp. 13-14.

18. Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s first annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1923, p. 123.

19. Ibid., p. 122.

20. Willis J. Abbot, "The Outlook for Better Papers," The Journalism Bulletin, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1924, pp. 1-7.

21. Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s first annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1923, p. 124.

22. Pitts, p. 32.

23. New York Times, April 28, 1923, p. 8 and April 29, 1923, pp. 1-2.

24. Time, May 5, 1923, p. 23.

25. Pitts, p. 6.

26. The letter from Beck to Krock, undated, is cited in Pitts, p. 7.

27. For a discussion of news values among Jazz Age journalists and independence as an occupational attribute, see John W. C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski and William W. Bowman, The News People: A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1976), pp. 101-111. Michael Kirkhorn, "This Curious Existence: Journalistic Identity in the Interwar Period," in Catherine L. Covert and John D. Stevens, eds., Mass Media Between the Wars: Perspectives of Cultural Tensions, 1918-1941 (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1984), pp. 127-139.

See also, Leon N. Flint, The Conscience of a Newspaper: A Case Book in the Principles and Problems of Journalism (New York: D. Appleton, 1925), pp. 292-299. Charles R. Corbin, Why News Is News (New York: Ronald Press, 1928), pp. 3 and 103. Albert F. Henning, Ethics and Practices in Journalism (New York: Raymond Long and Richard R. Smith, 1932), pp. 58-59. Silas Bent, Ballyhoo: The Voice of the Press (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), pp. 150-151. Melvin E. Stone, Fifty Years a Journalist (Garden City: Doubleday, 1921), p. 371. Daniels, p. 309.

28. Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s first annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1923, pp. 129-131.

29. Daniels, pp. 310-311. Penn Kimball, "Journalism: Art, Craft or Profession?" in Kenneth S. Lynn, ed., The Professions in America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), pp. 242-260.

See also, Nelson A. Crawford, The Ethics of Journalism (New York: Knopf, 1924), pp. 25-38. Willard G. Bleyer, Journalism (Chicago: American Library Association, 1929), p. 20. R. T. Porte, The New Publisher: A Tale of Twelve Cities (Salt Lake City: Porte Publishing, 1924), iv. Oliver Knight, ed., I Protest: Selected Disquisitions of E. W. Scripps (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1966), pp. 185-192. Robert W. Desmond, Conflict and Crisis: World News Reporting Between Two Wars, 1920-1940 (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1982), pp. 225-250.

30. Bent, p. 41. See also, Burgess Johnson, ed., Earning a Living by the Pen: Vocational Opportunities in Journalism for Young Women (New York: Vassar College, 1926), p. 15. Yost, p. 127. Flint, pp. 258-259. Henning, pp. 127-128.

31. Thomas L. Haskell, The Emergence of Professional Social Science: The American Social Science Association and the 19th Century Crisis of Authority (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1977), pp. 1-15. See also, Burton J. Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), preface. And, Talcott Parsons, "The Professions and Social Structure," Social Forces, 17, 1939, pp. 457-467.

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39. Bernard Barber, "Some Problems in the Sociology of the Professions," Daedalus, Vol. 92, 1963, pp. 669-688.
40. Carr-Saunders and Wilson, pp. 266-270 and 285.
41. Ibid., . 284.
42. Willard G. Bleyer, Newspaper Writing and Editing (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1933), pp. 357-358.
43. See Albert A. Sutton, Education for Journalism in the United States from Its Beginning to 1940 (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1945), pp. 1-4. Sarah Lockwood Williams, Twenty Years of Education for Journalism (Columbia: E. W. Stephens Publishing, 1929). Allen S. Will, Education for Newspaper Life (Newark: Essex Press, 1931). Also, Flint, pp. 258-259.
44. Flint, pp. 281-282.
45. Crawford, p. 25.
46. Ernest Greuning, "Can Journalism Be a Profession? A Study of Conflicting Tendencies," The Century Magazine, September 1924, p. 697.
47. "Sell the Papers! The Malady of American Journalism," by an anonymous newspaper man, in Harper's Magazine, June 1925, pp. 1-9. The quote is on p. 5.
48. The Journalism Bulletin, Vol. 3, No. 2, June 1926, p. 21 and Vol. 3, No. 3, November 1926, pp. 3-4 and 13.
49. Nelson A. Crawford, "Schools of Journalism Today," American Mercury, 6, 1925, pp. 197-200.
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51. Crawford, Ethics, pp. 186-239. Flint, p. 132. For examples of state newspaper codes see Frank O. Eagin, ed., Oklahoma Newspaper Code (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing, 1928), particularly Sec. 75 of that code, on p. 94, dealing with criminal misdemeanor. The Illinois code is cited in The Journalism Bulletin, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1925, p. 28.

52. Flint, pp. 269-281 and 442-457. Crawford, Ethics, pp. 211-224 and 233-239.

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57. New Republic, April 11, 1923, pp. 175-176.

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60. Ibid., pp. 72-77. See also, A.S.N.E. minutes, April 25, 1924 meeting, p. 23.

61. A.S.N.E. minutes, October 14, 1924 mid-year meeting of board of directors at Blackstone Hotel in Chicago, p. 26. Also, A.S.N.E. minutes of special meeting of board of directors, January 15, 1924, at New Willard Hotel, Washington, D.C., p. 27.

62. Editor and Publisher, January 24, 1925, p. 5. Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s third annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1925, p. 42.

63. A.S.N.E. minutes, October 13, 1925 mid-year meeting of board of directors held in Chicago, p. 31.

64. Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s fourth annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1926, p. 23.

65. A.S.N.E. minutes, February 9, 1926 organizational meeting of board of directors held in Cleveland, pp. 34-36.
66. A.S.N.E. minutes, October 5, 1926 mid-year meeting of board of directors held in Chicago, pp. 37-38. Also, A.S.N.E. minutes, January 13, 1927 meeting of board of directors held in Washington, D.C., p. 39. Pitts, pp. 31-32.
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68. Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s sixth annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1928, p. 84.
69. Ibid., p. 87.
70. Ibid., pp. 89-91.
71. Ibid., pp. 98-99.
72. Ibid., pp. 166-168.
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80. Casper Yost to Anna Yost, April 24, April 25 and April 26, 1922.
81. The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, June 4, 1941, p. 3.
82. Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s fifth annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1927, p. 18.

83. Editor and Publisher, January 24, 1925 editorial, "New Professional Status," p. 22.

84. Hughes' notion of "license and mandate" is discussed on pp. 447-452 of his article "The Study of Occupations," in Robert K. Merton, Leonard Broom and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., eds., Sociology Today: Problems and Prospects (New York: Basic Books, 1959). See also his discussion of occupational prestige, pp. 355-356; occupational image, pp. 356-357 and the setting of goals and standards, pp. 357-358 in Everett C. Hughes, The Sociological Eye: Selected Papers on Work, Self and the Study of Society (Chicago: Aldine and Artherton, 1971). Also, Everett C. Hughes, Men and Their Work (Glencoe: Free Press, 1958), pp. 32-33.

85. Theodore Caplow, The Sociology of Work (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1954), pp. 139-140.

86. Eliot Freidson, Profession of Medicine: A Study in the Sociology of Applied Knowledge (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1974), pp. xx and 338.

87. Paul Starr, The Social Transformation of American Medicine (New York: Basic Books, 1982), pp. 3-15.

88. Curtis D. MacDougall, Newsroom Problems and Policies (New York: Macmillan, 1941), pp. 1-22.

89. Bent, pp. 228-245. Flint, pp. 7, 13, 127 and 278.

90. The fear expressed by Greuning in Century, September 1924, p. 690, is echoed in Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s first annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1923, p. 155; also in 1924 meeting, pp. 114-115; in 1926 meeting, p. 89; and in 1927 meeting, p. 86.

91. Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s fifth annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1927, pp. 152-153.

92. Editor and Publisher, November 8, 1924, p. 9.

93. Editor and Publisher, June 14, 1924, p. 4.

94. Problems of Journalism, A.S.N.E.'s fifth annual meeting, Washington, D.C., 1927, p. 209.

95. Ibid., p. 109.

96. Ibid., p. 86.

97. Ibid., p. 27.

98. Yost, pp. 19-20.

99. The quotations is taken from Yost's 1909 writings and is cited in his obituary in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, May 31, 1941, p. 2.

CHRONICLE OF A FAILED
VERSUS TIME-LIFE

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Paper submitted to the Annual
Journalism Historians Association
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A FAILED *COUP*: W. EUGENE SMITH
TIME-LIFE INCORPORATED.

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Abstract.

This paper examines a period in the life of W. Eugene-- one of the most influential photographic journalists of the Twentieth century. It documents Smith's battle with news magazines, especially with Life and focuses on his final resignation from Life and the circumstances which drove him to such action. In addition, it examines the historically embedded institutional practices of news magazines against which Smith fought a career long battle and investigates his challenges to those practices. The battle is played out in Smith's photographic account of the city of Pittsburgh, a project which took almost two years to produce. This essay was intended, by Smith, to create a revolution in photographic circles and to change the course of the history of photographic journalism. The paper concludes with an evaluation of the "Pittsburgh" essay and Smith's failure to change the history of photojournalism.

Chronicle of a failed coup: W. Eugene Smith versus
Time-Life Incorporated.

"I would dream of being an artist in an ivory tower. Yet, it is imperative that I speak to people, so I must desert that ivory tower. To do this I am a journalist--a photographic journalist. In result, I am constantly torn between the attitude of the conscientious journalist who is a recorder of facts, and the creative artist who often is necessarily at poetic odds with the literal facts.

My principal concern is for the honesty of interpretation to be arrived at by careful study and through the utmost possible sensitivity of understanding. I would further, if the strength of talent be within me, have my accomplished image transcend literal truth by intensifying its truthful accuracy, indicating even of the spirit and symbolizing more. And my only editor would be my conscience and my conscience would be of my responsibilities--in constant disciplined rejudgement of my failures and my fulfillments."

W. Eugene Smith

In the historical accounts of Twentieth century journalism, scant attention has been paid to the history of photojournalism. In general, despite the pervasiveness of photographic images and the impact of the medium on modern life, there is a dearth of research which examines either the medium of photography or the impact of photography on society and human activities. The history of photojournalism in the United States is inextricably linked to the history of news and general interest magazines such as Life, Saturday Evening Post and Colliers. Moreover, the practices of photojournalists were developed and maintained

in accord with the institutional practices at the major magazines.

This paper examines a photographer who was one of the dominant influences on the history of American photojournalism --W. Eugene Smith. Gene Smith fought a career long battle with media institutions to change what he perceived as stifling practices which gave the photojournalist all the responsibility but none of the power for determining to what use his or photographs were put. In particular, in this paper, I examine the circumstances surrounding the production of one of Gene Smith's essays, "Pittsburgh", an essay that marked a turning point in his career and which he intended as a coup d'etat, an essay designed to revolutionize the practices of photojournalists.

In the course of his career as a professional photographer, Gene Smith worked with and for some of the largest and most powerful media organizations of the twentieth century. These included: Newsweek (1937-1938), Collier's (1939-1942); Parade (1942-1943) and Life (1938-1942, 1944-1945, 1946-1954). With each of these organizations Smith had a conflict of some description, but, it was with Henry Luce's Life that W. Eugene Smith had his most intense battles for it was at Life that the stakes were highest for all sides.

Conflicting philosophies

Life magazine was at its peak during the period of time Gene Smith was employed there. The 1940s and 50s were the

heyday of the so called "picture magazines" in the United States and Life was the most popular and influential of them all. Smith first worked for Life as a stringer from 1938-1942. This was a frustrating period for the young Gene Smith. Although he received over 171 assignments from Life only 81 articles ever carried his photographs (Johnson, 1981, p. 7). Moreover, Smith considered most of his assignments trivial. He resigned from Life in 1942 vowing never to work there again.

Two years later Gene Smith was back working as a war correspondent for Life. During the Second World War, Smith had an almost obsessive desire to cover the action from the front lines. After two years of work for Ziff-Davies publications he came to the recognition that only the power and influence of Life could get him what he wanted.

Smith's biographer William S. Johnson (1981) suggests that during World War II, Gene Smith "made moral choices in the face of conflicting and opposing ideologies, defined and defended beliefs about the nature and uses of his art, and eventually found a powerful mature photographic style to express those beliefs" (p. 40). It was also during World War II that Smith cemented his opinions about the role of photojournalism in society and his cynicism about the constraints placed upon him by publishers and editors.

The early seeds of Smith's conflict with the practices of news institutions is clearly demonstrated by his reaction to a photograph he had taken some years earlier which was

reproduced in Collier's magazine in July 1943. Smith objected strongly to the manner in which his photograph was used and the caption which accompanied it. He commented:

I am a little bewildered just how far I have a right to carry such a fight. After the picture has been taken and turned in it should be their baby completely, but...after I pour my heart and soul into a picture, it is awfully difficult to stand by and see it ruined (Smith quoted in Maddow, 1985, p. 18).

By 1948 Smith had no such doubts about how far he should, or was willing to, carry the fight against media institutions and their editors. In June 1948 he stated his beliefs (Smith quoted in Johnson, 1981, p. 41):

Photography is a potent means of expression. Properly used it is a great power for betterment and understanding. Misused, it has and will fire much trouble...The photographer must bear the responsibility for his work and its effect. By so much as his work is a distortion...in such proportion is it a crime against humanity. Even on rather "unimportant" stories, this attitude should be taken--for photographs (and the little words underneath) are molders of opinion. A little misinformation plus a little more misinformation is the kindling from which destructive misunderstandings flare.

Once his views were crystalized, Smith was relentless in his pursuit of control over the right to determine how

his photographs were used. Put Smith's philosophy of photographic journalism into the context of Time-Life Incorporated under the leadership of the conservative media magnate Henry Robinson Luce and you have the foundation for a major clash of ideologies.

Henry Luce (as he was commonly known) believed that "the function of enlightened journalism [was] to lead, to put in what ought to be" (Luce quoted in Halberstam, 1979, p. 76). Moreover, Halberstam comments, for Luce, "this was not just journalism, this was a cause." Henry Luce believed absolutely and completely in the role of the editor and publisher as the arbiter of news.

Against this background, one must ask the question: Why, then, did W. Eugene Smith stay with Life magazine as long as he did? The basis of an answer lies in one word--audience. Smith wanted a public forum for his photographs and his ideas about the medium of photography; Life provided him the biggest audience available to any one news magazine.

When he returned to Life after World War II, still suffering the consequences of his near fatal war injury, the clash between Smith and Life was already visible and the inevitable outcome was easy to predict. Johnson (1981) described how Smith "committed himself to producing an art of the highest moral intensions, and he came to regard deadlines, size limitations and pragmatic compromises as obstacles to his aims" (p. 41).

For several years the conflict between Life and Smith

was latent. He produced essays of exceptional quality for them, they, in return, provided him with the audience he desired and the financial resources to produce his photographs. Despite the apparent truce, neither side was particularly satisfied with the relationship. The situation came to a head in 1954 when Smith began work on a photographic essay about Dr. Albert Schweitzer.

"Man of Mercy"

In September of 1953, Smith contacted the Nobel Prize winning surgeon Albert Schweitzer about the possibility of travelling to the physician's leper colony at Lambarene in French Equatorial Africa. Smith wanted to take a series of photographs of the Doctor for publication at Life. Early the next year Smith received his permission from Schweitzer, and Life assigned the photographer to cover the story for them.

Smith went to Lambarene with high expectations. He had long been a fan of Schweitzer's and felt that the story might be his "personal salvation" (Maddow, 1985, p. 50). When he arrived in Africa, though, he was faced with a more complex story than he had expected. Smith was confused by the way Schweitzer treated his native servants and became gradually more frustrated as Schweitzer put limits on what he could and could not photograph. In desperation, Smith wrote Schweitzer a letter stating that he must be free to photograph what he saw or else he would be forced to call off the story. Schweitzer acquiesced and Smith spent hours

and hours shooting and developing prints. As was often the case, Smith extended the work on the essay way beyond the scope originally commissioned and failed to meet Life's deadlines.

On his return to the United States, Smith was infuriated and deeply distressed by Life's response to his photographic essay. He had put a lot of physical and emotional energy into his project on Schweitzer and had high expectations for the essay. Smith believed that he had captured the "truth" about Schweitzer and wanted the essay handled with exceptional care.

True to form Smith took more time and resources than requested and produced an essay that went far beyond the scope of the original assignment. This situation led to frustrations at Life and to the added problem that they did not have enough space available in their magazine to present the essay in anywhere near the form requested by Smith.

The situation at the magazine was further exasperated by the fact that the regular Life editor, Edward Thompson, was on vacation the week that the Schweitzer story came in. Thompson's replacement, Robert Elson, already made nervous by the delay in Smith's project simply accepted the layout done by Life's staff and pre-approved by Thompson and sent the essay to the printers without conferring with Smith.

Smith's Schweitzer essay, published by Life under the title "Man of Mercy" bore no resemblance to the essay Smith had envisioned, although it was a great commercial success

for the magazine. Smith wanted to show Schweitzer as one individual in a larger community, not to produce another "hero worship" story (Johnson, 1981, p. 147). He was devastated by the form in which his essay was to be published and resigned before the magazine containing "A Man of Mercy" appeared on the news stands.

Institutional practices

Before analysing Smith's struggle to gain the rights to his photographs and to have the power to control their use, it is necessary to examine what established practices he was rebelling against. In his own words, Smith's demands were variously "revolutionary," "unique," and "major."

A former Life editor, Maitland Edey, stated the viewpoint held by many editors both at Life and at other news or general interest magazines:

Photographers are congenitally poor editors. They are unable to look at their own work dispassionately, and have a regrettable tendency to value a picture by the difficulty experienced in obtaining it (Edey, 1978, p. 4).

It was because of such established attitudes and beliefs that Smith launched his battle with Life's editorial policies.

Edey describes how the production of a photographic essay for publication in Life typically involved the interaction and work of seven or eight different individuals. The topic was usually initiated by the departmental editor

who was usually responsible for the decision to create a particular photographic essay on a certain subject and, by providing the photographer with a shooting script, he or she was also responsible for determining what mood would be expressed by that essay.

The next step in the production line was taken by the photographic editor who, at Life, commanded a great deal of power. The photographic editor had the power not only to select which story topics to act on, but also to assign a particular photographer to cover that story. Thus, the photographic editor was in a position of power over both editors and photographers. For photographers, especially, he had the power to make or break careers at Life. In addition, the photographic editor reported directly to the managing editor who had the final say over what went into the magazine and in what form.

Once a story topic had been selected and a photographer chosen to cover that story, the ideas were presented to the photographer. His or her job, then, was to realize the idea of the editors. The photographer played the key role in creating what Edey called the necessary "singularity" of a photographic essay (1978, p. 4). A photographic essay is not just a collection of photographs, but should convey a mood, tell a story and deliver information (Edey, 1978, p. 4). Although many individuals worked on the final production of the photographic essay, that singular point of view had to be created by a skillful photographer. As Edey

(1978) describes it:

The concentration of emotion, or insight, or beauty, the coherence of a single point of view that is brought to a true photo essay--these things come into being when a set of pictures is the work of one man...A photo essay should have singularity (p. 4).

It was against such contradictory attitudes that Gene Smith rebelled. Smith believed that the photographer was frequently placed in the situation of having all the responsibility for creating a "true" and moving photographic essay, but with none of the power to really accomplish it. Smith's biographer, Maddow (1985) explains:

In the mass media...where millions of dollars were gambled on the wheel of public choice, the creator is just one step in a collective process: lucky like in movies or TV, to get his or her name legibly on the credits; what is left is responsibility without power. And this was what Smith resented to the very center of his soul (p. 45).

After the photographer had completed his or her shooting for a story, the entire set of negatives for that story was presented to the negative editor. Once the negative editor had made his or her selections, the final cut of photographs went to the designer for layout. The designer's role varied depending on the amount of involvement the managing editor chose to exercise, but generally his or her job was to arrange the photographs so

that they best told the intended story.

A very important, but often "behind the scenes" player in this production line was the researcher. The researcher was responsible for providing the raw materials for a story--the background research. This information was then relayed to the writer to assist him or her in compiling the accompanying text.

I have mentioned the key role of the managing editor on several occasions in the above discussion of the production of a photographic essay. The part played by the managing editor varied depending on his individual style (Life had no women as managing editors). However slight a role the managing editor chose to assume, he was the one who held ultimate power in the organization (with the exception of the publisher). The managing editor reported directly to the publisher--Henry Luce. And, it was the managing editor who decided what went into the magazine and in what form.

The system of production described by Edey was a set of highly regularized and systemic practices which prevailed at Life throughout its history. Another established practice, at least in the 1940s and 50s, involved the amount of space allotted to any photographic essay. Essays in Life usually ran between six and nine pages in length, exceptionally an essay would run eleven or twelve pages.

To understand Smith's demands from Life, therefore, it is important to place them within the context of the established practices of that institution. It is also

necessary to look at the ideological aspects of the situation. Smith was working for a conservative magazine, under the conservative media magnate Henry Luce, in the highly conservative era of the 1950s. While photographs were what made Life great, they came second to ideological concerns. Edey (1978) stated that "the beating heart of the photo essay is pictures" (p. 10). It is also necessary to point out, however, that in the case of most, if not all, magazines those pictures are only as important as the role they play in expressing the beliefs of the publisher and owner.

Smith's resignation, 1954

On November 2, 1954 Smith verbally resigned from Life. When his demands for greater control over his photographs and for changes in the layout of the Schweitzer essay were not met, Smith submitted his formal written sixty day notice. In a letter to Ansel Adams, Smith wrote that his resignation was "used as a weapon, pure and simple, calculated and untemperamental, and I think because of it the published story was improved if still not acceptable."

Smith's resignation was accompanied by a flurry of letters. Henry Luce himself wrote a letter asking Gene Smith to reconsider his decision. Edward Thompson, among others, reminded Smith of the consequences of giving up a secure and very well paying job (with reference to Smith's ever present and increasingly large debts). Johnson (1981, p. 147) summarizes the situation in 1954 as one in which "the logic

of Smith's art and his passionate commitment to the 'truth' of the subject could no longer coexist with the logic of Life's needs."

In 1953, over one year before Smith eventually left Life's employ, the seeds of a show-down between the photographer and the magazine were germinating. During the following year, 1954, Smith's letters--both to friends and to those involved with Life--are full of references to "battles," "losses and victories," "struggle," "wreckage" and other metaphors of war. Smith's careerlong, personal struggle with media institutions appeared to be heading toward some kind of crisis. The circumstances of his employment at Life in 1954 brought that crisis to a head. The photographer later said, "I had only three powers. One was to suggest; another was to protest; and the third was to threaten resignation. And one has to be fairly confident in oneself to threaten it, and it can never be a bluff" (Smith, 1977, p. 101).

W. Eugene Smith himself saw his fight with Life as just one incident that was symptomatic of the more general struggle of photojournalists to have control over their own materials. For Smith, this struggle was one in which a powerless individual fought against a large and powerful institution. In a letter to Edward Thompson written early in 1955 Smith noted:

It is possible that I may even return to Life, if it is sufficiently assured that the past will be

corrected...It is still my \$8.00 against their eight billion, my guts against their power--they crush too many people (Smith, in Maddow, 1985, p. 54).

The past which Smith wanted corrected was for the photographer to have control over his or her stories including control over access to the negatives of any pictures required. This was the motivating theme behind the remainder of Smith's career. In an interview published by Camera 35 in 1979, Smith is quoted as saying:

I wanted to stick to my ideals by refusing to work for publications unless I had the right to withdraw a story if it was being distorted. I would have compromised on some details but not on the distortion of my story.

Smith's resignation from Life and his refusal to work for any institution that would not grant him control of the layout and editing of his photographs had multiple consequences. Chief among these were the sacrifices made by Smith himself. As Johnson (1981, p. 148) rightly notes, when Smith left Life in 1954 he effectively broke his career in two. The photographer gave up his well paid job and perhaps more significantly for Smith, he gave up the audience of millions which Life magazine provided.

The decision to quit Life also opened up possibilities for Gene Smith. Chief among these was the fact that, perhaps for the first time, Smith was really free to develop his personal style in both his individual photographs and in his photographic essays. One key development was that Smith

came to believe that the traditional form of the photographic essay was outdated. In an exchange of letters between Smith and Life editor Edward Thompson, Smith discussed what he regarded as the necessary changes which needed to be made in the form of the photographic essay. He wrote:

I believe I have outgrown Life's present concept of the photographic essay...I think the magazine must continue to change to hold even steady--and in order to avoid suffocation...I believe that the structure of the pictorial-prose essay must gain a far freer flexibility of form, both as to length and in treatment, for handling the exceptional when the exceptional is possible. The photograph itself should be of greater stature and of more importance than the limited, the merest making of an editorial point.

It was under these circumstances that in 1955 while he was working for the cooperative photographic agency, Magnum, Smith accepted a contract from the well known writer Stefan Lorant to take a series of photographs of Pittsburg to be used as illustrations in a book about that city.

The "Pittsburgh" project

Smith was excited at the opportunity to work with Stefan Lorant because Lorant had a reputation as an innovative editor and one who, as editor of Muncher Illustrierte had developed a new form of the photographic essay. Lorant saw the photographic essay as a form more akin

to documentary than to sensational news portrayal, an opinion which complemented Smith's own.

Lorant asked Smith to produce a photographic portrait of modern Pittsburgh. For his work Smith was to receive \$2,500, the project was expected to take five weeks and Smith was asked to produce one hundred final prints. Smith accepted the commission, but gradually without Lorant's consent, or even knowledge at first, expanded the project way beyond its original scale. Smith eventually produced about 13,000 negatives, a ratio of 130 to one on the original one hundred photographs requested.

Over the next two years Smith became obsessed with the "Pittsburgh" project. As early as April 1955, Smith was aware that he and Lorant saw the goals of the assignment differently. Only a few months into the project another major theme was established. Smith's resignation from Life had left him almost broke financially and his relentless pursuit of the "Pittsburgh" project was to throw him and his family into abject poverty.

Smith was soon so far behind Lorant's schedule that the relationship between the editor and photographer became increasingly strained. Smith never received the \$2,500 he had contracted for and his poor financial situation became rapidly more serious. Nothing, however, could distract Smith from his work.

Smith's work on "Pittsburgh" was supported in part by two Guggenheim fellowships which Smith was awarded in 1956

and again in 1957. These grants did not begin to cover Smith's vast household and photographic expenses.

Estimating his budget in a letter to Henry Allen Moe at the John Simon Guggenheim foundation, Smith explained that during his first year of work on "Pittsburgh" he had spent approximately \$38,000. On the other hand, his income from photography during that same period was only \$2,582 and 78 cents!

For Smith "Pittsburgh" was a mission. On October 3, 1955 Smith wrote to his brother Paul: "If I complete it, I shall survive...Beyond that, I shall create history...and influence journalism from now on" (Smith quoted in Hughes, 1989, p. 356). Smith wanted to produce a portrait which captured the feeling of Pittsburgh, not one which simply recorded its facade.

Publication

The book for which Lorant had originally commissioned Gene Smith's photographs was published in 1964, six years after the intended date. In the ensuing years, Smith was approached by several magazines regarding his Pittsburgh photographs. These magazines included Look and Life. Both magazines offered generous sums for Smith's photographs, but none would agree to the photographer's demands for complete control over his photographs, their layout and the accompanying text.

In 1958 Bruce Downes, an editor at Popular Photography magazine--who had seen some of Smith's prints of Pittsburgh--

-offered to publish his essay with Smith's original layout and text. In addition, Downes assured Smith that he would have the right to approve all captions before the essay went to print. Smith agreed to the offer and the Pittsburgh essay appeared in Popular Photography's Photography Annual of 1959.

In his review of Photography Annual's presentation of the "Pittsburgh" essay for the New York Times, Jacob Deschin prefaces his comments with a statement which explains one of the key differences of the "Pittsburgh" essay. It was unusual, as Deschin indicates, because it was:

The dream of every photojournalist--to make his own picture selctions and plan his own layout--[which] became a challenging reality for W. Eugene Smith when the ditors of the 1959 Photography Annual...placed at his disposal thirty-six pages to present his photographic essay on Pittsburgh (p. 15).

Critical response.

While sole control over the production and use of their work may be the dream of every photographic journalist, accomplishing that dream does not gurantee good critical responses. Critics' reactions to "Pittsburgh" are mixed. Endelson (1979) wrote of Smith's essay: "While 'Pittsburgh' is unfinished, it is as much a statement of art as the Schubert Eighth Symphony" (p. 13). A more typical response, however, is that described by Maddow: "The published essay ['Pittsburgh'] has Smith's characteristic flaw: too much

weight of moral meaning on too little visual support" (p. 61).

The "Pittsburgh" essay, as published in Photography Annual broke all the rules and defied the conventions of a traditional photographic essay, and the result was primarily to confuse the audience and to anger those critics and editors who opposed any change in the status quo.

A failed coup?

W. Eugene Smith's career was, in part, one long battle to have the right to edit and determine the form in which his own work was published. He hoped "Pittsburgh" would be a landmark that would serve as a precedent for other photographers seeking the same goals. An important question to ask, therefore, is: How has the status of photographic journalists changed since 1959?

In the 1970s, Rosenblum (1978a, 1978b) conducted an ethnographic study of photographic journalists. She found that contemporary photographers working for newspapers and news magazines have even less control over their end product than they had in the 1950s. This loss of control is primarily due to technological advances.

Rosenblum reports that photographic journalists are typically issued standard equipment by the institution they work for; usually a 35mm camera and three lenses. All photo-journalists use 400 ASA film because automatic film processing equipment used at news institutions is coupled to match that film. The goal of all news organizations is to

get their photographs out as fast as possible in order to beat the competition. If all the required technological processes are followed, a photograph can make a news edition if it arrives one hour before the presses begin. Thus, Rosenblum (1978b) concludes that the entire photographic process at news magazines is dominated by technology:

The way the picture finally looks, then, is the result of a kind of assembly line production in which individual persons make discrete decisions about pictures. Furthermore, these decisions are typically not made in consultation or in concert with one another (p. 427).

With the introduction of electronic cameras and the use of fax machines the distance between the photograph shot by a photo journalist and the photograph printed in a news magazine has grown even greater.

In this account it is obvious that the issues W. Eugene Smith fought so hard for--control over the use of photographs, autonomy to capture a subject as the photographer sees it, time to cover an issue accurately--have become submerged by the bureaucratic structures which operate in media institutions. While "Pittsburgh" remains Smith's magnum opus in terms of quantity, it did not revolutionize the form of the photographic essay, nor change the role of photo journalists. It was, in conclusion, a failed coup.

Note.

All unreferenced citations to W. Eugene Smith are from his unpublished correspondence. These unpublished materials are part of the W. Eugene Smith archive at the University of Arizona at Tucson. All materials cited here were obtained from boxes AG 33:17 (1948-59) and AG 33:18 (1953-59) and from files of "General Correspondence" 1953, A-Z and "Correspondence" 1954, A-Z (Lamb & Stark, 1983). Any quotations from and references to these archival materials are with permission from Kevin Eugene Smith and the Heirs of W. Eugene Smith.

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The Journalist as Modern Sage: James Agee and the Prophetic Voice

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The Journalist as Modern Sage: James Agee and the Prophetic Voice

Anyone who truly perceived the present, he maintained, could also see the future, since "all possible futures are contained in the present."

Philip Marchand, Marshall McLuhan

Few modern writers have been as earnestly prophetic as James Agee. In so many forms of writing -- poetry, novels, criticism, screenplays, short stories, autobiography, letters and, especially, journalism -- Agee discerned, in the tradition of Thomas Carlyle, the signs of the times. He warned of the division and fragmentation of modern American life, its indifference to land and the people who tilled it, and its growing industrial arrogance, culminating in the atomic bomb. Agee called the kind of prophetic writing he wanted to do "the directest, most incisive and specific, and angriest possible form of direct address, semi-scientific, semi-religious; set in terms of the greatest available human intensity."¹ He envisioned pieces of writing "whose rough parallel is the prophetic writings of the Bible."²

In Elegant Jeremiahs, George P. Landow argues that Victorian sages such as John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold and Carlyle established a vital Anglo-American non-fiction literary genre. He cites Carlyle's "Signs of the Times" as the first fully developed example. He suggests that portions of the work of some important contemporary journalists -- he specifically discusses Tom Wolfe, Joan Didion and Norman Mailer -- may fall within this genre.

Landow's Victorian sage, writing in a genre derived from biblical prophecy and apocalypics with occasional metaphoric infusion from classical mythology, speaks as an outsider, a doughty critic of the way things are or of inimical social forces that changed the way things were. He conceives of this sage as *forthspeaker* rather than *foreteller* of events.

As heirs to the tradition, he argues, 20th century prophets sometimes depart from the Victorians, but still are likely to be both satirical and visionary, to both attack and inspire their readers and to seek meaning in ostensibly trivial or grotesque events. They, too, seek to restore the powers of language, to warn of impending dangers, and to define what is human and what is not in an age of technology. They are more likely to seek credibility by confessing their

inadequacies than by claiming divine sanction. And, in a time of moral and intellectual relativism, they repeatedly try to persuade the audience, usually episodically rather than through carefully structured arguments, that they are percipient and reliable observers who must not be ignored.³ Landow cautions that the sage "may have strange progeny or stepchildren, and one cannot fully appreciate the importance of the works in this genre until one tracks them all down and discovers all the ways in which the words of these elegant Jeremiahs take form and the possibly strange and unexpected effects they produce."⁴ This paper attempts to track down one of the most singular of these strange progeny and to see what Landow's hypothesis might tell journalism historians.

As a child in Knoxville, Tennessee, Agee, then called Rufus, first wondered "who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth." When he tried to recall the intuitions of childhood in the 1940s as he was writing an autobiographical novel, published posthumously in 1957 as A Death in the Family, he described himself as a six-year-old boy listening to the sound of the wind in the trees outside his bedroom window in 1916.

The light put the shadows of moving leaves
against the curtains Without touching each
other these leaves were stirred as, silently,
the whole tree moved in its sleep

He heard the summer night.

All the air vibrated like a fading bell

Darkness said:

When is this meeting, child, where are we,
who are you child . . . do you know who you
are . . . ?

He knew that he would never know. . . . That
yet in that desolation, he was not without
companions. For featureless on the abyss,
invincible, moved monstrous intuitions.⁵

Now what were these "monstrous intuitions," these
"strange prophecies" he heard or imagined in the rustling of
the leaves of trees? He put into the mind of the child a
certain prescience about his father's death. In the novel,
Rufus and his father walk downtown "in the light of
mother-of-pearl" after supper to see a Charlie Chaplin film.
On the way home, Rufus senses their mutual dependence but

that very night his father is called to the side of his own father in the mountains north of Knoxville, a journey from which he never returns.⁶ Hugh James Agee was killed in an automobile accident near Knoxville on May 18, 1916 and his son grieved over his loss throughout his life.

Richard N. Owen rented a room from Agee's mother shortly after the accident when he was a student at the University of Tennessee. He recalls that Rufus was "greatly affected by his father's death and was crying all the time." Owen at that time was in the Students Army Training Corps and drilled regularly on the University of Tennessee campus a few blocks away. He recalled that a Marine recruiting officer was also residing in the Agee home.⁷ The child Rufus could have had little awareness of the war in Europe, but the mature Agee, recalling the presence of soldiers in his home, possibly coupled the coming of war to the child's prescience. His father's death came only six weeks before the slaughter of the Somme battles and direct American involvement in the conflict came within a year.

For the rest of his childhood, Agee clung precariously to an intensely guilt-ridden, precocious religious faith largely

imposed on him by his devoutly Anglo-Catholic mother. An Exeter classmate recalls that as a schoolboy Agee was "inwardly scratched with anguish."⁸ As a student at Harvard, Agee wrote a poem about prophecy for The Harvard Advocate. Called "Good Friday," the poem begins:

High in Dodona's swaying groves
High in the grey, the glimmering oaks,
Dodona's cauldrons, convolute,
Groan on the wind strange prophecies⁹

Dodona is thought to have been a grove of sacred oaks at Epirus where Zeus was revered. Priests and priestesses drew oracles by interpreting the sound of the wind rustling the branches and vessels of brass in the trees and the murmuring of a sacred spring that gushed from the roots of a great oak.¹⁰ Agee's poem has Pan hearing a prophecy of the coming of Christ and being crucified himself against two trees in the grove. Milton, Tenneyson, Cowper, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Carlyle addressed the theme in different ways.¹¹

When Agee hitchhiked from Harvard to New York for a job with Henry Luce's Fortune magazine in 1932, he was a troubled and troubling young man. Before him lay the city he

had first seen at the age of 15, when he had "walked in the late brilliant June dusk into the blinding marvel of Times Square. . . my heart nearly breaking for joy here where all the shows of every kind on the otherwise rural round planet were spread at once before me, a giant tray of choiring diamonds."¹² But at 22 he was "settling into despair of everything I want and everything about myself. If I am, as I seem to be, dying on my feet mentally and spiritually, and can do nothing about it, I'd prefer not to know I was dying."¹³ He had been contemplating suicide, and with true melancholic angst, proclaimed that the "whole spiritual tone of this time seems the darkest and saddest in centuries."¹⁴

Fortune was a curious place for him to work out his own salvation. Founded in 1928 as a new kind of business magazine that would both celebrate American capitalism and tenderly probe its weaknesses, Fortune had attracted a stable of superb writers who were hardly sympathetic to their subject matter. Eric Hodgins, a managing editor, said he thought Fortune had "the most brilliant magazine staff ever to exist in America" in spite of the fact that the staff was "insane, unreliable and alcoholic." Before Agee's arrival, the magazine's editor had flung himself, stark naked, to his death

off the roof of a building.¹⁵ Agee himself later contemplated plunging from his office on the 52nd floor of the Chrysler Building to the street below.¹⁶

Although Agee "sat in his office and sucked on the end of his pencil for so long after he was hired" that his mentor, Archibald MacLeish, was afraid he would be fired, he soon distinguished himself on a number of assignments.¹⁷ These included moralistic assessments of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Roman society under Fascism, horseracing at Saratoga, the commercial orchid industry, cockfighting, pollution, a cruise ship and other topics from which he extrapolated odd and original insights in often stunning prose.

In these stories we begin to hear "monstrous intuitions" and "strange prophecies" that would seem to fulfill Landow's criteria for the 20th century sage. In most of them, some sort of death is in progress. An Italian prince quietly waits for death "in his marble-skinned and magnificent and cold palazzo." Gamecocks

"can imagine no happier paradise than one in which rages an endless free-for-all, ending constantly in death." The Tennessee Valley Authority must move the graves of pioneer settlers including Agee's own ancestors and reconcile their

descendants to a new way of life.

In his Carlylean essay on smoke, he likens industrial effusions to "the breath of a collective beast, the breath of our time: foul, sterile, baneful to the things we cherish. . .and engendered by our civilization everywhere, like a curse that some obscure and nameless god might have laid upon us"¹⁸ The Greenhouse Effect and other ecological disasters lay in the future, and the beast slouches onward, bringing new terrors.

An extraordinary essay, "The Great American Roadside," illustrates his broadest use of the prophetic voice. The assignment began in the summer of 1934 when Agee's editor, Ralph Ingersoll, had "a real honey of an article idea." He wanted to send Agee out on the roads and highways springing up throughout the country to accommodate the increasing volume of automobile traffic.¹⁹ Karal Ann Marling speculates that the assignment owed its inspiration to Sinclair Lewis' 1928 novella The Man Who Knew Coolidge. The novella places the redoubtable George Babbitt in the position of learning from his friend Lowell Schmaltz about the roadside kitsch awaiting him along his proposed vacation route. Marling suggests that Fortune may have wondered

what affect the Depression was having on the roadside economy.²⁰ Agee was more than up to the assignment. During the summer of 1929 he had hitchhiked across the country to find work in the fields. With impeccable credentials as a bourgeois tramp, he wrote stories about his adventures in The Harvard Advocate.²¹

If Agee glanced upward as he walked through the Chrysler Building lobby on his way to the open road, he would again have noticed on its ceiling the world's largest mural, a celebration of transportation, power and technology culminating in this splendid cathedral of the automobile. Light poured through etched glass above three magnificent entrances and illuminated the variegated red Moroccan marble walls.²² Below, revolving on a turntable, was a glistening 1934 Chrysler Airflow, an eight-cylinder, five passenger, aerodynamic sedan, hardly at all like the brass-nosed, black 1915 Model T Ford Agee's father had driven off a rural road 18 years earlier.²³

The fatal accident had been caused, in part, by a difficult stretch of descending, unpaved road that forked abruptly over a narrow bridge near the site of a Civil War skirmish. The road was not unlike most others of its time, especially in

the Southern Appalachians, but within two decades some 900,000 miles of "hard-fleshed highway" stretched across the country and the automobile had become the driving wheel of the American economy.²⁴ While the automobile was remaking the landscape, creating suburban villages out of forests, fields and pastures, huge amounts of capital were required to accommodate the necessary commercial and infrastructural changes. The automobile helped create the prosperity of the 1920s and then helped drive the country straight into the Depression.²⁵

But the Depression was, if anything, hastening the great migrations that were occurring on the vast highway system, activating the wanderlust that had been a part of the American character since before the wagon trains. Writers from Whitman to Twain to Hemingway had in some measure celebrated the American road but Agee was chary of what he saw as contemporary sentimentality about tourism and the American pioneer spirit. He sensed that Americans found in motion a counterfeit form of the empirical knowledge that comes from purposeful travel.

For two months Agee watched "the spreaded swell and swim of the hard highway toward and beneath and behind

and gone and the parted roadside swarming past," documenting what he saw and thinking about the story.²⁶ Agee wrote furiously for weeks after his return until Ingersoll snatched 8,000 words off the top of his desk one evening and sent them to the printer. Agee, unaware of the larceny, continued writing until Hodgins told him the story was already in galleys.²⁷ The story contained many elements of the prophetic voice suggested by Landow.

Agee begins by stating and then exaggerating the human scale of what he has observed: "by very considerable odds the greatest road the human race has ever built. . . . incomparably the most hugely extensive market the human race has ever set up to tease and tempt and take money from the human race a new way of life, a new but powerfully established American institution." The road is at once both a great technological and democratic triumph and a means by which those who built the road will become victims of predation and exploitation. The human thus becomes conjoined with the anti-human. The road's true purposes are ambiguous, elusive, "not well defined." But the purposes of the roadside are clear. The roadside is organic, inseparable from the whole organism: the continent, the people, the

automobile, the road and the roadside, and "the ultimate expression of the conspiracy that produced it."

The reader is buffeted by the sage's jibes. Certain facts the reader knows, but their significance "may never have sharply occurred" to them. The word *sharply* is indicative of the tone of the attack, which progresses with the admonition that even if the reader is aware of "these things as they are, it isn't likely that you know just why they grew so fast, just why they are as they are." The reader is further afflicted by the claim that "few" Americans know much about themselves, implying that all must attend as the prophet enlightens them.

Agee finds the American people racially restless, restive "entirely for the sake of restiveness." They move about for no reason, like nomadic tribes that have lost sight of their covenant. Exposed in the wilderness, they leave themselves open to their enemies, and the instrument of their destruction is the automobile. He introduces the automobile in a parody of the Book of Genesis: "So God made the American restive. The American in turn and in due time got into the automobile and found it good." Like forbidden fruit, the automobile at first satisfies the hunger for freedom but then sharpens that same desire for even greater mobility. Ultimately the

automobile becomes an "hypnosis," becomes "the opium of the American people," leaving them malleable, bemused and comatose. A circle is completed and it will "whirl for pleasure and for profit as long as the American blood and the American car are so happily married."

Then the sage moves to distinguish himself from lesser prophets, the satirists who merely ridicule the roadside. They fail to see that the phenomenon is not merely derisory but exists because the city, with its costly and often disreputable hotels, interrupts and delays travel. The new sojourners "have money to spend but not on the marble foyers of their forefathers. Their money is dedicated to motion. . . ." The road provides a functional alternative to the hotel: the cabin camp. The camp succeeds because it is simple and efficient, a sound contribution to the American landscape although its destiny is uncertain.

Agee finds meaning in the grotesque. He finds a tourist cabin that has been converted from a rabbit hutch and a hen house in a camp gussied up by petunias and a tawdry rock garden. He satirizes the owners of the camps, who survive by trying to run subsidiary businesses while tending to their clientel. He finds "signs and portents" of their future in

legislation intended to regulate them and raise their standards. He sees in these laws the hand of the hotel owners who fear competition from the camps, but predicts that the improvements will ultimately doom the hotels by making the camps even more attractive to the middle class.

When he makes a specific prediction about the future, he confesses his lack of prescience and his uncertainty. He doubts that the camps will be replaced by chain-owned and standardized establishments as they, of course, ultimately were, and he misreads the basic economic advantages of centralized management. But he clearly understands the essential fact: "that more and more powerfully, the habit is upon us to refuel and eat and sleep and amuse ourselves not in the towns as towns -- they slow us up -- but along the open roadside which is a new kind of town itself, and in the little towns that have all but turned themselves into roadsides."

And along these roadsides the sage points to an infinite variety of commercialized caves with their fraudulently-named lakes and chambers, stands offering trinkets and debased foods, institutional icons and grotesque colossi. He acknowledges their appeal as popular and ostensibly

innocent attractions but reminds the reader that their purpose is predatory and narcissistic, their solicitations counterfit and their appeal unwholesome. He concludes with a warning that the traveller, now emblematically described as an "autoist," reacts "delicately to the wonders of this land out of the midst of his easy coma" in ways revealing the inner mind.²⁸

Highway historian Warren James Belasco acknowledges the popularity of Agee's essay. He notes that during a time of class unrest, the road had indeed provided a powerful image of unity. But Belasco points out that this imagery also served, perhaps ironically, as good public relations for the automobile industry.²⁹ Projecting these observations a half century and more into the future, we can note with recognition the national gridlock on the highways, the continuing destruction of the cities and the voracious commercialization of the roadside in ways Agee could hardly have imagined.

Despite the freedom he enjoyed to write such prophetic essays, Agee grew increasingly restless and cynical as a Fortune staff writer. He later complained of his "three years of exposure to foulness" as he continued to demonstrate his ability to venture into the countryside and find meaning in

ordinary events.³⁰

"Saratoga" discloses the dark side of the horse racing industry, which brought the well heeled to the Adirondacks for recreation provided by gamblers and prostitutes. A law that prohibited bookies from openly soliciting at the race track had been repealed in 1934 and Agee closely observed their tactics with the wry insight of a Damon Runyon. In order to attract off season business, Franklin Roosevelt, as governor of New York, had encouraged development of the springs at Saratoga as a spa. But the city saw little new business because the newly mobile middle class motorists were not inclined to spend months lolling indolently beside the waters as the wealthy had done for decades. It was too easy for them to get to Saratoga on the new highways and just as easy for them to move on when they grew restless. Saratoga is really just another terminus on the Great American Roadside.³¹ When the racing season ends, all that is left in the city is "the chill and the very temper and the very cold of death," Agee's familiar metaphor for the age.³² And by 1951, another Tennessean, Sen. Estes Kefauver, was paying attention to the Saratoga gamblers. His televised Senate crime committee hearings exposed the mobsters who

controlled the gambling and prostitution rackets and brought about reforms that impeded their trade. Saratoga was never the same.³³

Taken as a whole, Agee's articles form a codex filled with cryptic warnings, often satirical, usually ominous. But what he really wanted was an opportunity to step outside his text and to comment directly on its actual significance. To do this he needed a project that would enable him to operate on a larger stage. The opportunity came suddenly in the spring of 1936 when Ingersoll asked him if he would like to return to the South to write an article about tenant farming. Agee was "stunned, exalted, scared clean through."³⁴ When he returned to New York at the end of a two month trip through the South with the photographer Walker Evans, his notebooks contained the elements of what would become Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, one of the great prophetic books of the 20th century.

Fortune's rejection of Agee's manuscript, its eventual publication by Houghton Mifflin in 1941, its subsequent failure and its rediscovery in 1960 after the success of A Death in the Family in 1957, has become a piece of literary folklore. Let Us Now Praise Famous Men has itself been much praised, variously interpreted, sometimes dismissed by unregenerate

critics. Considered as a book of predictions, the work has limited utility. But understood as prophetic writing in the tradition of Landow's modern sage, the book stands as a stunning example of forthspeaking journalism.

At its narrative level, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men is the story of three tenant families living in Hale County, Alabama in the middle of the Great Depression. There is little direct quotation in Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, but the book is actually full of voices. The tenants speak obliquely as the prophetic voices of the priests and priestesses of Dodona. They are especially garrulous in their silences, communicating more by their countenances and their primitive intuitions than by their voices. As a piece of straight reportage, the book attempts to explain cotton tenantry less as an economic phenomenon than as a problem in human divinity. The book is as much a theological or teleological treatise as it is sociology or economic history. The real villain in the book is journalism itself. In a poem written for Walker Evans, Agee calls the two journalists "spies, moving delicately among the enemy" and the poem goes on to invoke the patronage of the mad King Lear, who finally wanted to take on the mystery of things as if he were a spy in the service of God.³⁵

But Agee and Evans were spies in the service of Henry Luce and Fortune magazine, exploiting the misery of human beings for profit. In a sense, it is as if King Lear wrote the book, and the content could be summarized as: "*Howl Howl Howl.*" Agee felt that as journalists they were expected to write not about people with immortal souls but about people who were members of broad statistical categories. He felt they had no right to intrude on the lives of naked helpless wretches, nor did they have any right to call them naked helpless wretches.

Another bit of irony lies in the fact that Time Inc., Fortune's parent company, subsequently became Time-Warner, the world's largest print and entertainment conglomerate. Time-Warner is in limited partnership with Whittle Communications, which has its headquarters in Knoxville across the street from St. John's Cathedral, the church in which Agee was baptized. When plans for the firm's new headquarters were unveiled in 1986, owner Chris Whittle told the press the complex would be topped by "James Agee-style writing garrets."³⁶

Throughout the book, Agee assumes the prophetic posture by denouncing his reader's unworthiness, his own inability to respond to what he sees or to explain his mission ("just say, I

am from Mars, and let it go at that"), and the corruption inherent in any act of passively observing the misfortunes of others.³⁷ Masses of facts are presented but these are used primarily to show the limitations of language and traditional reportage. As in "The Great American Roadside," the reader's understanding of facts is challenged: "To grasp such facts, to try to understand them and their application, would seem as primal and as relevant to and influential upon the rest of what we are and do as breathing. Our own inability to grasp them or our negligence, which amounts to the same thing, does not qualify us very highly to handle more difficult facts which are of central importance. . . ."38

When trivial objects used by the tenants are described, they serve to draw the reader into the sanctity of existence and to assist the sage in forthspeaking. There is, for example, a long discussion of an oil lamp by whose light the sage may, in respectful silence, "tell you anything within realm of God, whatsoever it may be, that I wish to tell you. . . ."39

At another level, the sage confesses that he is completing an autobiographical pilgrimage into the sources of his own existence: "And so in this quiet introit and in all the time we have stayed in this house, and in all we have sought, and in

each detail of it, there is so keen, sad, and precious a nostalgia as I can scarcely otherwise know; a knowledge of brief truancy into the sources of my life, whereto I have no rightful access, having paid no price beyond love and sorrow."⁴⁰

Along the way, the sage encounters grotesques, like shadow figures dredged up from the subconscious. "The older man came up suddenly behind me, jamming my elbow with his concave chest and saying fiercely *Awnk, awnk*, while he glared at me with enraged and terrified eyes. . . . The woman spoke to him sharply though not unkindly . . . as if he were a dog masturbating on a caller, and he withdrew against a post of the porch and sank along it to the floor with his knees up sharp and wide apart and the fingers of his left hand jammed as deep as they would go down his gnashing mouth" ⁴¹

The theme of exploitation and a warning about the future is couched in a pre-Orwellian porcine analogy: "What would we have to think of hogs who, having managed to secure justice among themselves, still and continuously and without the undertone of a thought to the contrary exploited every other creature and material of the planet, and who wore in their eyes, perfectly undisturbed by any second

consideration, the high and holy light of science or religion."⁴²

A central concern is the question of how we are to respond to the plight of the tenant farmer. Writers of the 1930s had made the tenant farmer a symbol of the national malaise. Many of their accounts had brutally exploited the degrading conditions in which many of the tenants lived. Agee wanted nothing to do with this kind of writing and suspected the motives of publications such as Fortune that commissioned such articles. In his view, "the comfortable have always been able to lick their chops over the hunger of others if that hunger is presented with the right sort of humorous or pathetic charm."⁴³

William Stott calls Let Us Now Praise Famous Men "a book of doom and desperate resignation."⁴⁴ Stott finds that nearly all the reviewers of the book's 1960 edition agreed that Agee had proved unreliable as a social prophet. In the spirit of the era, the assumption was that massive federal spending programs, the Second World War and the post-war prosperity had provided some hope for the tenants and had lifted many of them out of poverty. But Stott argues from a 1973 perspective that Agee was not far off the mark and that the

"doom Agee foresaw has been largely realized."⁴⁵ Actually rural poverty declined until 1973, but then conditions began to worsen again.

Dale Maharidge and Michael Williamson visited Alabama in 1986 to find out what had become of Agee's tenants and their descendants. They concluded that Agee was overly pessimistic; the lives of many of the tenants had improved and they were as a class not devoid of hope. Sharecropping had not endured as an economic system of exploitation as Agee believed it would. But they acknowledged that most of the tenants remained in precarious circumstances, vulnerable to economic recessions and unable to draw much succor from periods of national prosperity. The decline of sharecropping had caused terrific economic and social upheavals. And the individual stories Maharidge and Williamson uncovered held little reason for optimism. As Agee predicted, the tenants faced a dismal future, and Maharidge and Williamson, if anything, turned up more grotesques, dreary landscapes and despair than Agee and Evans found a half century before them. The land the tenants worked is now so barren it seems "some terrible holocaust must have claimed them."⁴⁶

After returning from Alabama, Agee continued writing for Fortune but soon began reviewing books and films for Time and The Nation. Agee used The Nation columns as forums for his social criticism. They are especially notable for his skepticism about the presentation of the war to the American public, calling the "well-paid shamming of forms of violence and death which millions a day are meeting. . .of an order more dubious than the shamming of all other forms of human activity."⁴⁷

One of his most powerful war essays suggests a Carlylean treatise on power. He observes that Franklin Roosevelt, upon returning from the Yalta conference, was profoundly changed, his countenance becoming "the face of a religious, even of a seer. . . . I felt in the face an intimacy with death and with tragedy which I had never seen in it before"

Finding it "hard to imagine that history can ever have brought any man into a more terrible predicament" than the new president, Harry Truman, Agee says that the existence of great men such as Roosevelt did not shake his belief that "the best that is in any ordinary man is illimitable." Conflict, he believes, will strengthen not only Truman, but all ordinary men "because sympathy, responsibility, love, magnanimity,

resoluteness and the obligation to selflessness, now more clearly than before, rest with great and equal weight upon all human beings who can so much as apprehend their existence." He argues that, to a great extent, "one is forced to fall back on a metaphysical yet very literal faith in unanimity and massiveness of spirit. I believe that this exists, and that if it is known to exist it can have very great power."⁴⁸

Nevertheless, he felt the post-war world was going to be severely tested by the splitting of the atom, which he saw as the great symbolic event of the century. As early as 1943, he deplored the intensifying schizophrenia which he believed was especially prevalent in the United States, isolated as it was from the fighting that was being done in other parts of the world. While other peoples were coming of age, Americans, "a peculiarly neurotic people," remained "untouched, virginal, prenatal," and would emerge from the war "almost as if it had never taken place."⁴⁹

Propagandistic films would "demolish one's moral and aesthetic judgment by splitting both and by turning the split forces of both against each other."⁵⁰ When the bomb was

finally dropped, he mocked those who believed "transcontinental commuting, better complexions, and the millennium itself will be achieved on the power generated from an old hat check" and thought atomic energy was, at its core, a monsterously egotistical enterprise.⁵¹ Drawing imagery from a Time essay he wrote on the dropping of the bomb, he wrote in 1947 that reason involves "not merely the forebrain but the entire being," residing in the ability "to recognize oneself, and others, primarily as human beings, and to recognize the ultimate absoluteness of responsibility of each human being," nothing less than the essential argument of the 49th Psalm.⁵²

Within Agee's film criticism are numerous prophecies about the present and the coming age.

***On "the ghastly gelatinous nirvana" of television:**
"In another fifty years--or ten, I am willing to bet--moving pictures will no longer be the central medium. Radio will have taken their place: television, very likely, will have taken the place of both."⁵³

***On war propaganda:** "Conditioned by such amphibious and ambiguous semi-information, we are still more likely than otherwise to do things to defeated enemies which, both

morally and materially, will finally damage us more deeply even than them."⁵⁴

***On liberty:** "... a terrifying number of Americans, most of them in all innocence of the fact, are much more ripe for benevolent dictatorship--and every dictatorship is seen as benevolent by those who support it--than for the most elementary realization of the meanings, hopes, and liabilities of democracy."⁵⁵

***On Stalin's Soviet Union:** "More elaborate than any others they have developed a science of contempt for present humanity, including themselves in their own scruples as individuals, in the name of future humanity, and a science for utilizing, and conquering, those who believe merely in each other, or merely in self-advantage."⁵⁶

***On the Cold War:** "...the real crucial conflict is not between the Stalinists and the nominal democracies. It is between those who honor existence and so, necessarily, morality and those who honor either only in the hypothetical future, if at all."⁵⁷

***On humanism:** "I realize that I must be exaggerating when I think of it as hardly existing in a pure and vigorous form anywhere in contemporary art or living, but I doubt that

I am exaggerating much."⁵⁸

But it is in the nature of prophecy to much exaggerate the dangers of the present, and Agee's gloomy social assessments and predictions were intended to arouse a deluded, apathetic public. The cinema, with its challenge to distinguish reality from fantasy, provided the forum he needed to make explicit the less accessible warnings he had sounded in his poetry, his more circumspect magazine writing, and the self-absorbing rage of Let Us Now Praise Famous Men. Those works, his film and television scripts and his letters would be discovered by a wider audience only after Agee's death on May 16, 1955.

Viewing Agee's writing as a series of prophetic warnings opens an important body of work to new interpretation. If Landow's hypothesis is correct, it should be worthwhile to examine the writings of other important journalists to see the relationship between journalism and prophecy. Ben H. Bagdikian suggests that although journalists have a predilection for forecasting, they have learned from experience that looking into the future can be an uncertain and a professionally dangerous business: "Like the shrewder pagan priests who evolved from medicine men, today's forecasters put responsibility for future events on the head

of Unnamed Higher Authority." ⁵⁹ Landow offers journalism historians another interpretation of prophecy. The example of James Agee shows how a gifted journalist may see through, and sometimes beyond, his own time.

Notes

¹ The Collected Short Prose of James Agee. Ed. Robert Fitzgerald (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 160.

² The Collected Short Prose, 148.

³ George P. Landow, Elegant Jeremiahs (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1986), 17-40. See also: Landow, Ruskin (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985). Stanley L. Jaki's study of the journalist G.K. Chesterton, Chesterton, A Seer of Science (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1986) is a much fuller treatment of what is attempted here. While this paper focuses on Agee, it should be viewed in the context of a growing body of literature on literary journalism. See, especially, Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century, edited by Norman Sims (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990); Ronald Weber, "Journalism, Writing, and American Literature," Occasional Paper No. 5 (New York.: Gannett Center for Media Studies, April 1987); Thomas Berner, "Literary Newswriting: The Death of an Oxymoron,"

Journalism Monographs, No. 99 (October 1986); Shelley Fisher Fishkin, From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1985); Thomas Connery, "Fusing Fictional Technique and Journalistic Fact: Literary Journalism in the 1890s Newspaper," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brown University, 1984); and Nancy L. Roberts, "Course Combines History, Literature and Journalism," Journalism Educator, Spring 1988.

⁴ Landow, 191.

⁵ James Agee, A Death in the Family (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1957), 80-84.

⁶ A Death in the Family, 3-22.

⁷ Richard N. Owen, Sr., Recollections and Reassurances (Nashville, 1982). Privately published; telephone interview, January 23, 1988.

⁸ Edward Blair Bolles, "Exeter in the Ordovician," Exeter Remembered. Ed. Henry Darcy Curwen (Exeter: Phillips Exeter Academy, 1965), 137.

⁹ James Agee, "Good Friday," The Harvard Advocate Anniversary Anthology. Ed. Douglas A. McIntyre and Karen S. Hull (Cambridge: Schenkman Books, 1987), 134.

¹⁰ Sir James George Frazer, The Golden Bough (New York:

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¹¹ Thomas Bulfinch, The Age of Fable (New York: The Heritage Press, 1942), 170-172, 298-299. Thomas Carlyle, The Life of John Sterling. Second Ed. (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Co., 1852), 74.

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